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THE trial of the Metropolitan-Vickers engineers is beginning in Moscow as we go to press, and we can only await the result with the hope that the bark of the G.P.U. will prove to have been worse than the bite of the Soviet Court. How formidable the bark was is shown in the second White Paper which was published on Monday. The accused, British and Russians alike, were subjected to a police inquisition, which though it may be normal in Russia—and not in Russia only—is utterly repugnant to us. An eleventh-hour sensation was created on Tuesday by the appearance in *Technica*, the organ of the Heavy Industries, of an article charging the Metropolitan-Vickers Company itself with bad faith. Why, if there was any truth in these charges, they should not have been heard of before we do not know. There is no reason to believe, however, that the article was inspired by the Soviet Government, or that the Court will take cognisance of it. On one point at least in this sorry business—and it is a very big point—we can feel satisfied. The British Government does not want any breach of relations, either diplomatic or commercial, with the U.S.S.R., and we hope the Russians will do their part to avoid any such catastrophe.

### The Dragooning of Germany

The destruction of the liberties of the German States has now been completed by the appointment of "Statthalter," or Governors. These are the nominees of the central Government, and will wield supreme powers, including that of appointing Premiers. The Federal Constitution has in fact gone into the waste-paper basket, and the States become mere provinces. In Prussia the Nazis have consolidated their position, and further depressed their Nationalist and Junker allies, by the appointment of Captain Göring as Premier. Captain Göring has recently stimulated hopes and fears by announcing that "National-Socialism" means Socialism and not merely Nationalism. How his particular brand of Socialism is to be expressed in action remains to be seen. So far as the persecution of individuals is concerned, there has been nothing spectacular during the past week; but the combing out of Jews, Marxists, pacifists, and other such traitors, has been pursued ruthlessly. A slight relief has been given by a Reich decree which allows an increase in the number of "non-Aryan" lawyers who may practise; but in general the Jews continue to be treated as dogs.

### A Police Gaffe in London

A good many people were asking, when they heard of the police removing anti-German notices from Jewish shops in Whitechapel last Sunday, whether Hitler's writ was running in England. It was an amazing piece of official officiousness. The Home Secretary, questioned in the House, said that he had not been consulted; the order was apparently given by the Commissioner of Police, in view of the possibility of these posters provoking a breach of the peace. Asked whether the police had any ground for believing in such a possibility, Sir John Gilmour said he "imagined" they had. He, and Scotland Yard, must have a very lively imagination! However, the "little

misunderstanding," as somebody quaintly called it, was soon cleared up, and the posters were back next day. But behind this looms another and a larger question, in which officialdom maintains a wooden attitude. Our Aliens' restriction law is an effective bar to the right of asylum to victims of persecution abroad—a bar which conflicts sadly with the best traditions of this country. The *Temps* boasted the other day that France was the only country open to refugees. If that is not absolutely true, it is true enough to cause chagrin to any Englishman with liberal feelings.

### The Washington Discussions

President Roosevelt, with the swiftness of movement that we are learning to associate with him, has broadened out the forthcoming consultations with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald into a series of discussions with each of the leading European Powers, and also with China and Japan, Mexico and certain of the South American States. In effect, he proposes to hold in Washington during the next month or two a full-dress rehearsal for the often-postponed World Economic Conference, with the difference that he seems to intend to meet the representatives of the other nations separately and not together. It is officially denied that anything of a committal character is to be done at these talks; they are to be only for the purpose of exploring the ground in a preliminary way. But in these matters the preliminary explorations are often far more important than the final ratifications; and the Washington discussions should at least show whether a basis for common world action is possible. For our part, much as we desire to see tariffs lowered and other barriers to trade relaxed, we have little hope from a frontal attack on these abuses, unless the United States is prepared to give a clear lead by lowering its own tariff, and unless a basis can be found for common action to raise world prices by increasing the demand for goods and labour as well as by making more money available. At present Mr. Roosevelt's policy in the United States is having a deflationary, and not an inflationary, effect. It is tending to lower prices, and not to raise them. The restoration of "sound" banking is bound to work in this way, as long as it stands alone. The question is how far Mr. Roosevelt is now prepared to go towards an expansionist policy, and how far he is able to pull the European countries along with him.

### A Diehard Demonstration

This Government lacks the skilful touch in handling its Diehards. In the Commons on Monday, Mr. Churchill and Sir Henry Page Croft leading, they assailed the composition of the Joint Committee of Lords and Commons which is to work over the draft of the Indian Constitution, with the aid of Indian witnesses, who will be heard but will not vote. Their main contention was that the Government by nominating six Ministers, including four members of the Cabinet, to sit among the 32 Peers and Commoners, had excessively represented itself, and had gone too far in ensuring a mechanical official majority. Mr. Churchill's case was weakened by the fact that he is a non-co-operator and had refused to serve. The Diehard amendment to reduce the number of Commoners from 16 to 12, by omitting the Ministers' names, secured 118 votes against the Government's 209. Eighty Tories voted for it and many abstained. The Labour Party supported and the Liberals opposed the amendment. The result was a remarkable demonstration of the unpopularity of the Government's Indian policy among Tories. Doubtless they are better pleased by its exploit of last week, when it arrested over four hundred members of the Congress Party for attempting to hold their annual conference in Calcutta. The Congress may be important in the sense that it can make no show in the streets—in India as in Germany beating is an effective instrument of terror—but there is no reason to suppose that its opinions have grown wilder, or that they are less widely held.

### Western Australia and Secession

The election for the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia has resulted in a defeat of the Nationalists, the Government Party, and a victory for the Labour Party. What makes this the more surprising is that whereas the Ministerialists stood for secession from the Commonwealth and Labour did not, the referendum, which was held concurrently with the general election, shows an overwhelming majority in favour of seceding. This demand for independence is intelligible enough. Western Australia is a country that lives by primary production, with an area of nearly a million square miles and a population of about 350,000. It is inadequately represented in the Federal legislature, where its interests are subordinated to the high tariff policy of the industrial eastern States. But this vote will not necessarily be followed by secession—for that there must be a majority of votes of the whole Commonwealth, expressed in a majority of the States—and we hope that Western Australia will stay where she is. The "Balkanisation" of the continent is neither desirable in itself nor the only possible remedy for Western Australia's grievances. The Commonwealth Parliament can amend its constitution and its policy, and it ought to do so. Mr. Lyons, the Federal Prime Minister, announces that the various States will now "be asked to consider whether an impartial body should be appointed to inquire if assistance is really required by less populated States." Perhaps this means business.

### The Government and the Slums

The Government has made a valiant attempt to put the best face on its housing policy by issuing to the local authorities a new circular in which they are urged to speed up their plans for clearing the slums, and instructed to submit definite schemes by September. The Minister of Health makes a fine show of having nothing so much at heart as the improvement of housing conditions; and there is no need to question the sincerity of his desire for slum clearance or the real change in the Government's attitude that lies behind this hustle. But the fact remains that the circular merely exhorts the local authorities, without offering them any form of assistance that was not available already; and there is only too good reason to believe that mere exhortation will fail to undo the harm done by past exhortations to "economy" and prohibitions of grant-aided expenditure. In any case, slum clearance, necessary and overdue as it is, can be no substitute for an active housing policy for the provision of additional dwellings; and in that sphere the "Anti-Housing" Act

still stands fatally in the way. We do not suggest that the latest circular is mere eye-wash; but we do deny that it brings any fresh contribution to solving the housing problem, or can be taken as any sign of a real reversal of the fatal economy policy of the past eighteen months.

### A Poor Plan for Iron and Steel

The "scheme of reorganisation" submitted to the Tariff Committee by the iron and steel trades is not a scheme of reorganisation at all; and the representatives of the trades have even been told as much by Mr. Chamberlain and the Committee in their comments upon the scheme. All that the representative body set up by the iron and steel firms has done is to propose a plan, on familiar lines, for creating a central organisation with power to negotiate agreements with producers abroad—e.g., the continental steel cartel—and to regulate the volume and prices of production at home. This central body is to work through a number of distinct associations, each representing a particular group of products. In other words, it is to reproduce the familiar structure of rings and associations in the industry. These associations will endeavour to concentrate production in the best equipped works, and to promote the improvement of plant and efficient co-ordination of processes; but the scheme embodies no provision for amalgamations, for writing down inflated capital, for finding new money for re-equipment, or for any of the important things which a real plan of reorganisation should cover. Moreover, the new body is neither to own nor to operate any works itself, nor to have "any power of interference with the rights of any individual producer." When the iron and steel trade was given tariff protection the concession was explicitly conditional on an adequate plan of reorganisation being applied. Clearly, no such plan is embodied in the present proposals; and even the present Government has been compelled to recognise their manifest inadequacy.

### Progress In Electricity

The "grid" is now nearly complete—so the Central Electricity Board announces in its annual report for 1932. The whole of Great Britain, except Northern Scotland—which covers 23 per cent. of the total area, but contains under 2 per cent. of the population—has now been equipped with a supply of electricity linked up with the "grid," and accordingly under the Board's control. The scheme, including £9,000,000 for expenditure on the standardisation of frequency, has so far cost over £32,600,000 in capital expenditure, and the Board has raised over £40,000,000 in borrowed money. Despite the effects of the depression the amount of electricity generated has increased, especially in the South and Midlands, and Great Britain is now the third largest producer of electricity in the world. In two areas the Board has already begun "normal trading"—that is to say, it is buying the supply from the "selected stations" and then selling it to the authorised distributors, in both areas at prices fixed in accordance with the terms of the Electricity Act. 3,670 miles of pylons have been erected, in most cases with fair regard to the amenity of the countryside; and over 2,000 miles of lines are ready for operation. Great Britain's experiment in the new method of socialisation, by means of public corporations, is thus fully established. It will be possible in the next year or two to begin drawing conclusions about its working. One thing can be said—the Board produces its report much more attractively than the provisioning of the Stationery Office allows Civil Service departments to produce theirs.

### America Goes Wet

The United States, or a large part of it, went "wet" at midnight last Thursday, after fourteen years of prohibition. The return of beer, as was to be expected, was welcomed in the big cities with a good deal of excitement and jollification, and no doubt a great many people drank more than they wanted, simply in honour of the occasion. Those who desired it (and could afford it) were, of course, always able to get it, thanks to the "speakeasies" and the bootleggers. Now they will presumably get it cheaper and without breaking the law—which are obvious advantages. But beer (especially beer with a maximum alcoholic content of 3.2) is not the favourite beverage in America, and until the Eighteenth Amendment has gone the bootleggers will continue to flourish on providing stuff with a kick in it. In this connection we came on a melancholy article in a French newspaper the other day, in which the writer bemoaned the American taste for whiskey and gin, and warned his countrymen against expecting a new market for their wines. Try them with brandy, if you like, he said, that is your only chance. Presently, we suppose, the American people will recover completely from the harm which Prohibition has done to their palates and their intestines and their respect for law. The struggle is not yet over; the Prohibitionist champions, we are told, will make desperate efforts to hold those States which still remain dry. But the legalisation of swipes is an important victory.

### Art and Advertising

We have often complained of the absence of *liaison* between manufacturers and the better artists in this country. It is a pity the art-critics do not devote a little less time to damning with faint praise unimportant shows of water-colours, and a little more to discriminating comment on pictorial advertising and commercial art in general. The majority of posters issued by Shell and the Underground, for instance, have far greater artistic value than the average pictures in an art exhibition. And now the Charnaux Corset Company have had the enterprise and good taste to commission Mr. Frank Dobson, one of the best sculptors in England, to make a statue of the ideal feminine figure of the present day. Last week it was to be seen at Selfridge's, where it was exhibited with a dozen decorative drawings also by Mr. Dobson, illustrating types of figure fashionable at different times in history. It was amusing to notice that it was an Etruscan statue which came nearest in outline to Mr. Dobson's figure. The "Charnaux Venus" is, of course, slimmer than most women—it represents an ideal which probably has some relation both to our love of the stream-line and to the contemporary cult of youth. In any case it is one of the sculptor's most lovely works, and, incidentally, it shows that there is just as much aesthetic interest to be found in delicate springing forms as in the obese figures which modern sculptors too frequently inflict upon us in their effort to be monumental.

# ARMS AND THE MEN

MR. NORMAN DAVIS, after his visit to Berlin the other day, said that he felt "very reassured, having found the new authorities ready and willing to discuss all problems." And Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was apparently equally cheered by his talks with Signor Mussolini in Rome. Most of the world feels a good deal less comfortable. Whatever the dictators of Germany may have said behind closed doors, we cannot call to mind any public words or deeds of Herr Hitler and his lieutenants which suggest a happy solution of the problems that face them and us. Nor do we find in the Duce's proposal of the Four Power Pact a hopeful method of promoting, in his own words, "a long period of peace for Europe and the world."

What have the Nazis to say on the question of international peace? They, like all Germans, claim equality in the matter of armaments. But they have pressed their claim in an ominous way, and it is idle to pretend that the temper of Nazi Germany to-day is pacific. We may allow for the natural exaggerations attendant on a revolution; but can we write off all the boasts and threats, all the revival of militarism, as sound and fury signifying nothing? And though it may be true that Germany is not really dangerous to anyone to-day, will it be true a couple of years, or even twelve months, hence, if her rearmament, and not a reduction of other people's armaments, is to be the method of achieving equality? On that point, we are not encouraged by the conversations in Rome last month. Italy in the early days of the Geneva Conference stood for a bold all-round scheme of disarmament. Perhaps she would still stand for it. But there is not much sign that Signor Mussolini is now seriously concerned to prevent the rearmament of Germany. Little if anything, indeed, seems to have been said about disarmament at all in the talks with the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. The project of the Four Power Pact, as Mr. MacDonald explained in the House of Commons, had as "its big and almost its only detail the revision of treaties," and the revision of treaties was to be a guarantee of peace. So it should be, and it is on that ground above all that we have always insisted on the necessity of revision. But we have never dissociated revision from disarmament, and to do so spells disaster.

The difficulties of revising the treaties must be great in any case; at present, with Hitlerism in the saddle in Germany and the Fascist designs revealed in Italy, they look almost insuperable. The whole conception of the Four Power Pact suggests a return to the old method of the Great Powers keeping peace among themselves by dividing up the territory of others and generally disposing of the destinies of the smaller States. Those States are in no doubt about it, and not only Poland and the Little Entente, but Spain, Holland, Belgium and the Scandinavian Powers have showed their opposition. And with France also on their side, it is perfectly clear that Mussolini's crude plan has no chance of adoption. Has any plan, then, a better chance? An agreement among the four Great European Powers to abjure force, to consult together, and to act "within the framework of the League" is possible, and might have notable advantages. But it would not on the face of it get us much nearer to treaty revision. Article XIX of the Covenant empowers the Assembly to advise the "reconsideration of treaties which have become inapplicable," and also to take account of "international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." But there is no treaty in Europe which, strictly speaking, can be said to have "become inapplicable," and whilst there certainly are international conditions endangering peace, countries determined on the maintenance of their present frontiers will require a great deal of persuading before they consent to alter them. The Poles, the Czechs, the Rumanians, are not as convinced as we are that they have got territory which they should not have. The Jugoslavs regard the Italian aspirations to Dalmatia as having no shadow of right. And all alike may put the only too obvious question to Italy and Great Britain and France—"What about South Tirol, and the former German colonies in Africa?"

These are the old difficulties which have always beset the issue of revision. To them must now be added the fears engendered by the new regime in Germany and its *rapprochement* with Italy. Is Mussolini aiming at a Fascist bloc, which will include Hungary and Austria as well as Germany and Italy, with himself, naturally, directing its policy? If so—and there are indications of it—then the re-mapping of frontiers means something more than an act of restitution, and something that might prove quite different from a guarantee of European peace. In all the circumstances it is not surprising that the anti-revisionists are prepared to die in the last ditch to defend their possessions, and that revisionists outside those States which stand to recover territory view the situation with dismay. Even those in this country who advocated an African mandate for Germany have been pulled up short by the spectacle of Hitler's treatment of great sections of his own fellow-citizens. Mr. MacDonald's repudiation of the idea of restoring Tanganyika to Germany was applauded by many as the refusal to give up a British possession; it was sadly approved by others for a different reason. Our administration of the negroes is not perfect; but its severest critics would hesitate to hand it over to the "Nordic" maniacs of Germany.

Nevertheless, revision is not to be counted as dead. The demand for it is insistent, and until it is satisfied there will be no real security on the continent. But it must come peacefully, by consent; it cannot be imposed by any group of Powers. And it will have to wait its time. How long that time will be it is impossible to say; it depends in greater or less degree on a number of factors—a genuine disarmament convention, a general economic recovery, the resuscitation of belief in the League, and, last but not least, Signor Mussolini. On him a great responsibility now rests. He holds at the present moment a key position in Europe. He has an influence over Herr Hitler, and over the policy of Germany, which he may use for good or evil. He can enjoin patience and restraint on the Nazis; he can temper their ambitions and check their bellicosity. He can do the same for the Hungarians—and for the Italians. He can affect the fate of Austria. He can, though this may be a harder task, allay the suspicions of Jugoslavia and her allies in the Little Entente. If he puts the peace of Europe before the aggrandisement of Italy he will shape his policy on these lines, and we may be within measurable distance of an amicable revision of the treaties. If he chooses otherwise, the odds are that we shall see them violated by war.

# OUR UNUSED WEALTH

IT is a commonplace that the world of to-day, or at least that part of it which has reached a high stage of economic development, is suffering from needless poverty in the midst of plenty. An estimated total of thirty million workers unemployed, according to the International Labour Office, furnishes some indication of the extent to which the world is failing to use the resources at its command for the production of wealth. But estimates of potential production based merely on the numbers out of work are apt to sound unconvincing, especially to those who believe that crude human labour is being rapidly superseded as an agent of wealth-creation, and that the world is in a position to enjoy a far more generous allowance of leisure as well as a far higher aggregate of material wealth. Technocrats in America and Douglasites in Great Britain are not the only people who proclaim that it is well within our power both to consume more and to work less, and that unemployment quite fails to measure adequately the under-production which at present exists.

On the other side there are critics of a different sort, who maintain that the existence of a large mass of unemployed is no necessary indication of a corresponding power to increase production. This school stresses the world's fall from grace in respect of saving, and throws doubt on the adequacy of capital equipment to achieve anything like the promised increases in production at a reasonable cost. In face of these divergent views it is worth while to estimate, as far as we can, to what extent the world, or the leading countries in it, are at present failing to use not simply available labour but combined resources of capital and labour available for the increase of production. This cannot be done at all completely or with any pretence to accuracy; but it is worth doing, even if the results are bound to be merely approximate and incomplete.

The first and most obvious evidence of a singular failure to make use of the available productive resources is furnished by the piling up of stocks of unsaleable goods, not in a few isolated cases, but of almost all the leading kinds of raw produce. In 1932 the world was carrying a stock of wheat more than twice as great as it used to carry before the slump set in. The stock of sugar had risen by about 150 per cent., that of tea by 50 per cent., and that of coffee by 100 per cent. Among raw materials stocks of cotton have grown from 7½ million bales in January, 1928, to over 10½ in January, 1933, and of silk from 145,000 bales to 243,000. Rubber stocks have risen from 184,000 tons in July, 1924, to about 634,000 at the end of 1932. Stocks of tin are up from about 25,000 tons in 1928 to 57,000 to-day. Lead stocks have grown from 48,000 tons to 177,000 since 1930, and stocks of zinc from about 40,000 tons in 1928 to 127,000 in Great Britain and the United States alone. Copper stocks were about 300,000 tons in 1928 to 1929, and are about 700,000 tons now. These figures are of varying authenticity and completeness, and it is not possible to present them on a comparable basis for the different commodities; but there can be no doubt about their broad significance. For it can be safely assumed that the piling up of large stocks indicates a substantial reserve of unused current productive capacity.

GENERAL INDICES OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

| | 1928. | 1929. | 1930. | 1931. | 1932 (Whole Year) | 1932 (3rd Quarter) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 100 | 106 | 98 | 89 | — | 83 | |
| United States .. | 100 | 107 | 87 | 73 | — | 53 | |
| Canada .. .. | 100 | 108 | 92 | 77 | 74 | 62 | |
| Germany .. .. | 100 | 101 | 84 | 69 | 57 | 53 | |
| France .. .. | 100 | 109 | 110 | 98 | 76 | 73 | |
| Belgium .. .. | 100 | 100 | 90 | 79 | — | 65 | (Sept.) |
| Poland .. .. | 100 | 100 | 82 | 69 | 54 | 54 | |
| Japan .. .. | 100 | 111 | 106 | 101 | — | 107 | |
| U.S.S.R. .. .. | 100 | 124 | 156 | 189 | — | 167 | |

A second and certainly not less valuable indication of the under-use of productive resources is furnished by the indices of actual industrial production now issued by a number of the leading countries. These, dealing chiefly with manufactures, serve as a complement to the figures given above for raw materials. It is worth while to set out the general figures for a few of the leading countries in tabular form, as shown in the previous column.

These figures need a little elucidation. The average for the whole year 1932 has been given where it is available; but as in most cases the full figures for the last quarter are not yet to hand, those for the third quarter have been given in all cases. It will be seen that in the United States industrial production had actually fallen to less than half the level of 1929, and in Germany and Poland to little more than one-half. In Belgium and Canada the fall exceeded one-third, and in France it reached one-third. In Great Britain, on the other hand, it was only one-fifth, while Japan was not far below the level of industrial production of 1929, and the U.S.S.R. far above it, though there a sharp fall took place in the third quarter of 1932 from the still higher levels of the first half of the year, when production in industry was twice as large as in 1928.

In general, these figures clearly indicate a great unused reserve of productive capacity. There is plainly no physical obstacle to production to-day on at least the scale reached in 1929. Indeed, it is clear that, if the increased supplies could be sold on profitable terms, every country could produce a good deal more than it was producing before the slump began. This is clearest of all in the case of Great Britain, where large productive resources were lying unused before the slump; but it is true in a smaller degree of every country, for the power to produce goods has been advancing during the years of decline in actual production, and most countries could have improved substantially on the output they were producing in 1929.

We need not, however, content ourselves with these general figures; for we can corroborate and strengthen from other sources the evidence which they present. We can safely assume, as a general proposition, that the countries of the world would have no difficulty, if the conditions of the market allowed, in producing again as much of any leading commodity as they have actually produced in any year during the past decade. On this basis the fourteen leading coal-producing countries could easily turn out 50 per cent. more coal than they were turning out in 1932. The eleven leading producers of pig-iron could increase output by 150 per cent., and the twelve leading producers of steel could increase output by over 140 per cent. The potential increases would be even greater if the U.S.S.R. and Japan were left out; but, on the other hand, they are smaller for Europe, excluding the U.S.S.R., than for the United States. Even so, Great Britain could, on this inadequate basis of calculation, double her output of both pig-iron and steel (actually she could do far more than this), and add at least a quarter to her output of coal. Germany could multiply her production of iron and steel by three, and add fully 50 per cent. to her coal production.

It is harder, for lack of figures, to estimate the possible increase of production for most manufacturing industries. But something can be said of potential production in the textile trades and in engineering. In the third quarter of 1932 the output of the British textile industries, taken as a group, was only about three-quarters of the actual output in 1928, when production was, of course, already far below capacity. German textile production had fallen by a third from its peak point in 1927, and Belgian by nearly a half since 1928. The French and Polish textile industries were producing under 60 per cent. of the 1928 output. On the other hand, in the United States textile production in the South has been relatively well maintained, on a foundation of cheap labour, and has recovered sharply during the latter part of 1932. But it is safe to say that Europe could easily add a half to the present production of textiles, and would probably find little difficulty in doubling its output.

For engineering, the figures are scantier. British pro-

duction of engineering goods fell by considerably more than a quarter between 1929 and the third quarter of 1932, and French production by well over a third. Polish production fell by nearly 60 per cent., and German production actually by more than 60 per cent. Shipbuilding suffered in all countries an even more sensational fall. Assuredly the world is in no danger of running short of the means of building more machines to make goods, or more vessels to transport them overseas, if only the problem of finding purchasers for the goods can be overcome.

It would be possible to prolong greatly this series of illustrative figures. The purpose of this article, however, is not to exhaust the subject or the reader, but merely to give a general statistical indication that the common assertion of a vast potential increase in world production is fully capable of being verified. It can, of course, still be argued that the figures will not bear the interpretation placed upon them, because the world's productive capacity is lop-sided, and it is not equipped to produce more goods in the right proportions to enable them to be exchanged so as to meet an expansion of consumers' demand. But of what important classes of goods (except perhaps gold, which stands in a special position) is it alleged that a potential shortage exists? Certainly not of any of the leading foodstuffs or raw materials, or of any of the great staple manufactures. Nor, even if the world wishes to consume a higher proportion of its income in services rather than goods, is there any sign of a shortage of human beings capable of performing these services. Power supplies are abundant, and can be rapidly expanded: there are abundant facilities for increased transport of goods; and there is plenty of building labour standing idle in every country. What, then, are we waiting for, save the means of consuming the supplies of goods and services which can be readily produced as soon as the present deadlock in the commercial and financial system can be ended?

But we are not here concerned with the reasons for the world's plight, or the best way of escaping from it, but only to reinforce in a concrete fashion the generalisation that if we are poor and getting poorer it is by our own silly fault, and not because of any scarcity of the means of producing greater abundance. That some people, alive to this absurdity, have been led greatly to exaggerate the present potentialities of an increased standard of living is no reason for refusing to recognise that they exist, and that the failure to use them is a confession of the utter failure of the capitalist civilisation of the twentieth century. In this article these potentialities have been not exaggerated, but deliberately and manifestly understated; even so, they are great enough to give us all abundant cause for shame in the present and for hope in a future when men have gained enough sense to make themselves masters of things, and to insist on bringing unnecessary and soul-destroying poverty to an end.

# A LONDON DIARY

IF you want to spoil your Easter holiday take with you a copy of Allen Hutt's *Condition of the Working Class* (Martin Lawrence, 6s.). Every now and again a book is published which sears the conscience of middle-class people. The Blue-books which exposed the conditions in factory and mines a hundred years ago, Charles Booth's survey and the pamphlet *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* are obvious instances. But Allen Hutt's book is not only a documented and careful survey of facts backed up by the authority of Government reports, it is also an extremely successful attempt to do for 1933 what Engels did in his *Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844. Like Engels, Mr. Hutt interprets the facts into the simplifying precision of Communism. But it is no use thinking to escape the book by calling it Communist propaganda or saying that it exaggerates, "stresses the gloomy side," or is biased and unfair to honest efforts to improve conditions. The question is whether capitalism has any answer to its indictment and whether the picture it gives is substantially true. Its analysis of the economic situation in South Wales, Lancashire, Clydeside and London shows that in spite of the social services and the dole we are back again at "Hungry England." It discusses the effects of the economy campaign on the unemployed and points out how surprisingly strong is the tendency to go back to the conditions which Engels exposed, when men could not find work and the country depended on the sweated labour of women and children. It deals only incidentally with particular instances of hardship, but there are some "human facts" about the housing conditions, in Glasgow and elsewhere, which do not readily leave the mind. To me the best epitome of the whole situation is the punishment of unemployed miners in South Wales for stealing coal. They live on the top of a coal bed; they have, after paying rent, a few shillings for the week's food for the family; the company refuses to allow the men to work the outcrops themselves, though it admits that it will never pay to work them commercially. Yet men are heavily fined for taking coal. That seems to me to summarise the indictment. In a world of plenty capitalism finds that it does not pay to give people work or warmth or food. If they ask why, in the name of God and common sense, they should not get up and work and feed themselves they are told that property is sacred and that no economic system can exist without the stimulus of private enterprise. The police batons are there for those who do not find this a convincing reply.

* * *

In conditions like this, so admirably suited to the spread of religious orthodoxy, it is comforting to find the House of Commons giving a second reading to a Bill for the suppression of seditious and blasphemous teaching. The House may not see any way (apart from economy in relief) of demonstrating the love of God to the children of the unemployed, but it can at least protect their minds from seditious and blasphemous thoughts. A number of Members wanted to stop blasphemy not only among the teachers, but also among the parents, of the young. Others thought that it would be administratively difficult to stop unemployed parents from blaspheming—perhaps they feared an extension of blasphemy if inspectors called to find out what they were teaching their children. The Duchess of Atholl was particularly insistent that there was no attempt to stop "the intellectual type of free thought"; it was only ridicule and blasphemy she hoped to prevent. Thus teacher or father may explain to Tommy that he has doubts about the anthropomorphic nature of the Deity and even explain his hesitation in accepting the ontological argument for His existence. The law will only descend upon ribald language and cartoons—upon, presumably, Voltaire, Anatole France, Samuel Butler and Bertrand Russell. I was glad to have the assurances of several speakers that this was not class legislation in any sense (though admittedly it would only hit the poor, and not the intellectual, atheist) and that nothing was farther from the thoughts of our legislators than to interfere with complete freedom of thought and speech.

* * *

Britain did not enjoy the status that was her former pride. In earlier days we should only have had to send a couple of gunboats to release the British employees now held by the Russians.—From speech by Miss H. A. Coates to the British Israel at Exeter, reported in the *Express and Echo*, April 7th.

* * *

Even in Oxford, he was told, there was the October Club, with 300 members who were Communists, and he could not help thinking that if, instead of addressing themselves to the merits of Communism, they were to address themselves to some healthy exercise like rowing it would be much better.—Sir Reginald Craddock, M.P., in the House of Commons.

* * *

An item of religious intelligence from Memphis, Tennessee:

First Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Dr. Holcumb will preach. Subject: Is the Financial Depression disappearing? If so, what lessons are we learning? Mrs. W. L. Brown will sing: "Search me, O God!"

I am sure it is difficult to go for a cruise without spending several hours of each day utterly idle. Looking back over the winter we are happily leaving behind, I think of what a bad one it has been; much unemployment, and its attendant sufferings of inadequate feeding and clothing. Why should not one of these idle hours of cruising be turned into an hour of industry? The women, at least, might all try to knit or make one garment during their holiday; and, on returning home, send it to their own particular branch of social service. I believe that in this way quite a lot of suffering might be prevented at the onset of next winter. *Even now I have not solved the problem of the idle man;* but perhaps your readers can think of something helpful.—Letter to the *Times*.

* * *

. . . The actual reason for opposing Sunday cinemas—or any other form of "dis-spiritual" amusement, recreation, or leisure—is that it is definitely contrary not only to the law of God, but also to the inherent and age-old customs of the British nation. A nation which is, by Divine selection, the custodian of His kingdom upon earth—a truly wonderful heritage which is, alas! only too lightly cherished by this so-called modern age with its jazz-crazy, dog-racing, dancing, frenzy of cinemania, night-clubs, and garish pleasures.—Letter to local paper.

CRITIC

## KENYA AND THE GOLD COAST—A CONTRAST

EXCEPT for one small but rich gold mine, which is government-owned, all the mineral wealth in the West African colony of the Gold Coast belongs to the tribal authorities, or State Councils as they are called, which accordingly receive the royalties from the gold and diamond mines. In Kenya, of course, minerals belong to and royalties are paid to the Government. The difference is typical. The population of the two countries is about the same, the inhabitants are much the same sort of people, and the same Colonial Office is responsible for their administration. They have nothing else in common.

In Kenya 95 per cent. of the direct taxation is paid by the poorest, by people with family incomes of from £4 to £8 a year, and the incidence of that taxation is about 30s. per family. In the Gold Coast there is no direct taxation at all, of either rich or poor. In Kenya no African is allowed to buy or lease a plot of land in a town for a shop. In the Gold Coast practically all the shops belong to Africans. In the Gold Coast the staple crop, cocoa, is all native grown. In Kenya the principal crop, coffee, may only be grown on land belonging to Europeans. In Kenya not only did the Government take away the land of many thousands of natives, for giving to Europeans, it also passed laws that make it impossible for these landless people to buy or rent land. In the Gold Coast no African has been deprived of his land, and no one has any difficulty in getting land to cultivate.

Conditions in the various countries of British South and East Africa vary considerably. But the pattern of society found in Kenya may be taken as their type, and in the same way is the social pattern in the Gold Coast typical of West African conditions. How have differences so remarkable arisen? The answer usually given is that there are no areas of land in West Africa which, like most of South Africa and the East African highlands, are congenial to Europeans. That is true, but not the whole truth. Europeans have made determined efforts to get land in West Africa. What foiled those efforts, and what, in fact, explains the other differences between conditions in British West Africa on the one hand and British South and East Africa on the other is a difference in law. By a certain legal decision that was come to more than fifty years ago all the land in the Gold Coast was judged to be tribal land, vested in trust in those same State Councils. In Kenya, by contrast, the Government behaved as if it were the absolute owner of all the land in the country. Thus more than thirty years ago it took a strip of land half a mile wide and six hundred miles long, running from the coast to Lake Victoria, and built a railway up the middle of it. No tribal authority was consulted when the strip of land was taken and not a penny of compensation was paid for any of it. Then, some twelve years later, the Masai brought their famous suit against the Government for the restoration of the district of Laikipia that only six years previously had been guaranteed to them by treaty. The Masai lost their suit, but the result was that the Government passed into law an Ordinance that legalised its previous actions in treating all the land in the country as Crown land. Whether the Masai, or some other tribe from which land had been taken, would have won their suit if the Privy Council had been appealed to will never be known. The reason no tribe ever did so appeal was simply that action of the kind was regarded as seditious, and treated accordingly. The recent behaviour of the Government with regard to gold-bearing land in Kavirondo country, it will be seen, is no new thing. In that case, in fact, the evicted are being treated better than were their fellows in a score of earlier evictions. We were told, indeed, when the Ordinance of 1931 was passed, that the bad old days had gone for ever. But that will not happen until men of a new kind are sent to govern in Africa.

Though the people of the Gold Coast have been spared this greatest disaster that the people of Kenya had to suffer, the loss of half their land and the total insecurity of the rest, they are not without troubles of their own. Cocoa has fallen in price even more disastrously than have other staple products. To peasants that makes comparatively little difference, because all they have to do is to grow more food and buy less of imported trade goods. But their Government cannot economise so simply. The growing deficit from the railway is already £300,000. As its chief sources of revenue are duties on exported agricultural produce and duties on imported manufactures, its budgetry difficulties are so pressing that it is compelled to consider a resort to direct taxation. If its proposals take the form of the poll tax that has been such a curse in South and East Africa, one hopes the people of the Gold Coast know how necessary it is to defeat them.

Of their own internal troubles, perhaps the chief arises out of the policy known as indirect rule. It sounds well to us, no doubt, to say that Africans ought to have their own laws and institutions preserved. But what that generally means in practice is that those who govern them go back as far as they can in the discovery of tribal law, and tribal organs and their functions, then make such modifications in the system thus disclosed as European government requires (and some modifications are unavoidable, even where no grants of land are made to Europeans) and fasten that ancient system, thus modified, permanently on the people. What happens when this policy goes on long enough is illustrated in Natal, where Zulus have to go to European lawyers to have the old Zulu code, still enforced, explained to them. In the Gold Coast the trouble is not that the stereotyped Native State is an arbitrary despotism as it is in many parts of Africa. The Gold Coast States, on the contrary, are genuine democracies, but their method of election is so crazily intricate that the results produced are thoroughly bad. What else could be expected of political organs the same, and with functions the same, as they were a century ago? People's churchwardens in England are a democratic institution. But the fact that they are both indigenous and democratically chosen proves nothing as to their suitability to represent the people. It would be just as sensible to expect an assembly of churchwardens to choose from among themselves the Secretaries of State as to ask the organs of those Gold Coast "States" to choose African representatives to serve on the Legislative Council.

There is a widespread suspicion in the Gold Coast that Imperial policy is changing, even in West Africa. That suspicion is naturally related to the circumstance that many men with a training in some East African colony have recently been appointed to high positions in West Africa. On the theory that the health of Europeans must be protected from infection by their African neighbours, a theory not very honestly acted upon, there has been some introduction of the colour bar. Africans, instead of being appointed to more and higher official positions as their educational attainment have improved have in recent years found promotion to the higher posts not easier but harder. It looks as if the idea of

governing people on one side of the continent on principles profoundly different from those followed on the other side is proving not only illogical but impracticable. The better educated elements in West Africa are fortunately awake to their danger. Recent exposures of conditions in Kenya have made a deep impression. But what is chiefly needed is the application to East Africa of the experience of West Africa. Judged by every standard, of industry, dress, diet, health, education, the West African is immeasurably the superior of the East African. That fact is never disputed. Are we then to conclude that the very existence in the countries of East Africa of colonies of land-owning Europeans is what of necessity prevents Africans in those countries from being as prosperous as those on the other side of the Continent? There is no reason to believe that to be the case. The harm these colonies do is due not to their presence but to their privileges, to privileges from which Africans as such are excluded, and to subsidies at Africans' expense. That is most clearly seen in education. None of the secondary schools in Kenya is open to African boys and girls. How vastly better off are children in West Africa will be shown in another article. NORMAN LEYS

# THE STARS SPEAK

ONE of the journalistic curiosities of the day is the return of the astrologers into the Press. Is it that Fleet Street has begun to believe in astrology and has set out in good faith to pillage the stars in search of benefits for its registered readers? Or is the modern reader supposed to be so far out of danger of taking superstition seriously that he can be offered these predictions of his fate as an entertainment? I confess I heartily dislike seeing my future published in a newspaper. I am not sufficiently sure that astrology is an imposture. There is a relict of superstition in me that believes what it is told, and I shrink from hearing what may be foretellings of calamity. Hence I will not have my hand read or my fortune told by the cards, and I have a horror of having my horoscope taken. One would have to be a Stoic or an unmixed optimist to wish to know in advance the worst as well as the best that will happen. I am one of those for whom a black future, were it foreknown, would cloud the present: not knowing whether the future will be dark or fair, I can enjoy the flowering of the cherry tree and the song of the wren beside the dog's grave without apprehension.

Not that the astrologers when I have consulted them have been unkind to me. They have, as a rule, been flatterers and promised me fair weather. Even so, I have no wish to consult another one. Suppose he made a mistake in his calculations and foresaw calamity? Or suppose he made a prophecy that caused me as much trouble as another astrologer's prophecy caused Charles IX of France? "Will it be credited," asks Isaac D'Israeli, "that one of these magicians having assured Charles IX that he would live as many days as he should turn about on his heels in an hour, standing on one leg, that His Majesty every morning performed that solemn exercise for an hour; the principal officers of the Court, the Judges, the Chancellors and Generals, likewise, in compliment, standing on one leg and turning round?" Surely, if the astrologer could foretell the number of the King's days in this obscure fashion he could also have foreseen the number of times the King would be able to turn round on his heels in an hour and have spared him these morning exercises?

On the whole, however, the modern astrologer is less oracular in his utterances than his predecessors. A friend, knowing that this is my birthday month, read me out, a few days ago, an astrological description of the characteristics of those born between March 21st and April 20th, and I could find no fault with it on the score either of dismalness or of obscurity. We who were born during this period I discovered were born under the sign of the Ram which, it appears, "epitomises action." That is an excellent beginning. I become a man of action as I read. Who in this time of blossoming could help feeling even prouder to have been born in it when he is told: "This House [of Aries] also marks the opening of the astrological year, so in all ways your forces are resilient, impetuous, and expressive of a mental and physical energy marvelled at by those who do not possess your buoyant power"? I am not one of those who fall easy victims to flattery, but, when it is laid on with a trowel like this, even I begin to suspect there is something in it. "Marvelled at"! As I read that lovely phrase I find myself wondering whether the people who do not like me are not merely jealous. It is true that the worst of them will find some justification for their false estimate in the astrologer's admission that, while the best of us Arians become pioneers and leaders, "in others the native courage and vitality of the sign degenerate into a wayward and irritable restlessness." To be perfectly frank, my own jaw dropped a little at that, and it dropped still farther when I read: "You are all rebels, with little respect for old-established customs, which you are forever knocking down." Fortunately, the evidence of the astrologers is not accepted in the law courts. If it were, that sentence might very well land one in prison. Or consider the effect it might have if statesmen became converted to astrology as great men, such as Dryden, were in the past. Imagine Mr. Churchill in supreme power and a believer in astrology—and he has had wilder beliefs: the natural thing for him to do, after reading a sentence like that, would be to arrest everybody born between March 21st and April 20th and incarcerate us for life as enemies of law and order. Hence, while there is yet time, I protest that the charge against us is not true. I speak as one who has spent half his life, or more, in looking for the quietest, safest, and most comfortable way back to the old-world institution of the Golden Age.

An astrologer must be allowed one lapse, however, just as the law is supposed to allow a dog one bite. And certainly this astrologer makes up for his error in describing us as rebels by the deadly accuracy of the character-reading that follows. "There is danger," we are told, "that your impetuosity will plunge you headlong into ventures before you either analyse or count the cost. You prefer risk to monotony." As an Arian I admit the indictment. We Arians are very devils for not counting the cost. If you want evidence look at our unpaid bills. Yet there is something admirable—to ourselves—even in our faults, and we cannot help preening ourselves as the astrologer tenderly admonishes us: "Avoid extremes. Humanity owes so much to your intrepidity; but you also lose so much through lack of caution. You are born fighters, physically, mentally, morally, disliking restraint and opposition. Cultivate tact, govern your tempers, and you will do much to remove the hot-headed indiscretions cluttering up your path." Any Arian who does not recognise himself in these sentences would be incapable of seeing his face in a mirror.

Further, all Arians will be pleased to learn that their health is good, apart from possibilities of sunstroke, blood pressure, apoplexy, and cuts and injuries to the head. And, O Noble Astrologer, to announce on the authority of the stars: "Sleep is essential to you, as you use up much energy." Let no one henceforth attempt to hustle me out of bed in the forenoon on the plea that the housework is being held up by my lethargy. This is not lethargy. I am an Arian, and sleep is essential to me.

As I read this admirable news from the stars, I feel like one of those members of the audience who, when a speaker says that he must not detain them any longer, cry: "Go on, go on." We may learn some home truths about ourselves—home by the way is never sweet home when the truth is being told—such as that many of us are spendthrifts, rolling-stones, and find it difficult to concentrate; but honey always comes at the end. I can easily endure criticism from someone who says of me and my kind: "Yet work is a hobby with them and they do not tire easily . . . In no event are they easily cast down." We Arians do not ask to be regarded as perfect characters. All that we ask is to be regarded as more nearly perfect

than those who are born under any other sign than the Ram.

I myself, I find, belong to the third of three sub-divisions of the Arians—not the noblest, perhaps, but to me the most agreeable. If I had been born in the first, I should have been more martial. If I had been born in the second, I might have had "ginger hair and freckles." As it is, my less arrogant sub-division ensures "a philosophic background, and an intense love of animals, especially horses. These natives," adds the astrologer, "are inclined to gamble." Whether we are warlike, or red-haired, or philosophic students of the turf, however, the final summing up applies to all of us: "Arians are frank, ardent, and intense: they are the bustlers of the race."

Now, it is easy enough for the superficially minded to dismiss a belief in astrology as superstitious, but is it possible for any thoughtful man sincerely to argue that all the truths that I have quoted could be discovered by guesswork and mumbojumbo? Non-Arians may not see us as the astrologer sees us; but we ourselves know that the astrologer has hit the nail on the head in nearly every sentence. It is the uncanny rightness of the astrologers that makes me, while willing to listen to them about my character, reluctant to consult them about my future. I do not mind being told that the stars say that my favourite scent is that of the red geranium; but I should object very strongly to submitting to stellar guidance that would set me turning on my heels by the hour like King Charles IX.

Y. Y.

## THE OTHER CHEEK

THIS waving of the fiscal sword
Is brisk and brave and J.-H.-Thomassy;
I wonder, though, can we afford
To push too far the new diplomacy—
Which threatens, when offenders fail
Of due regard for our upbraiding,
Immediate measures to curtail
Our much diminished foreign trading?

We yet may rue the price to pay,
In dearer goods and markets shattered,
For teaching to the I.R.A.
How much the Treaty really mattered;
And boycotts upon Soviet trade
(As many quiet folk are fearing)
Are not the surest course to aid
The engineers—or engineering.

Then there are others—we may learn
Of some crude Nazi demonstration,
Which means that Germany in turn
Is listed for discrimination;
While from the U.S.A. one sees
(That great although no longer dry land)
Some nasty tales of third degrees,
And dirty work at Ellis Island.

Forgive these doubts! One likes to think
That Britain is not to be played with—
Yet unemployment will not shrink
When there is no one left to trade with;
Nor are we taught that, if one cheek
Be smitten by an erring brother,
The Christian ethic bids us seek
To smite ourselves upon the other.

MACFLECKNOE

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# Correspondence

## MR. KEYNES'S PROPOSALS

SIR,—I have carefully analysed D.'s letter in your issue of March 25th, and I find it composed of the following ingredients: personal disparagement, 40 per cent.; literary padding, 40 per cent.; and specific attention to the matter under discussion, 20 per cent. Of this last portion, one-half is qualitative and the other quantitative. I will first deal with the latter. D.'s argument can be paraphrased more or less into the following statement: "Inasmuch as the first pull of the piston in a locomotive is expended in taking up the slack in the drawbars between each railway wagon, the locomotive must not be counted as an instrument for pulling the wagons forward."

Granted that the first loan expenditure is frittered away in fuller employment for those already occupied, is this a reason for making no attempt whatsoever to initiate curative action? Is not this rather an argument for persevering with the medicine and for using whatever large doses of it may succeed in breaking the vicious circle? The industrial machine is suffering from under-consumption, while geared up for mass production. Private individuals have failed to provide the necessary stimulus, therefore collective action is necessary. Quantitative deficiencies are solved quantitatively. On the qualitative side D. takes too much for granted in accusing Mr. Keynes of being "stoutly constant to his fallacies." D. talks of "idle money" as if it were a constant quantity. This fallacy has been responsible for more mistaken policies than any other we can think of, unless it be the old fallacy of the "limited wages fund." I would recommend D. to study paragraph 47 of the Macmillan Report, where we are informed that "from the evidence of Sir R. Hopkins it would be a mistake to attribute this view to the Treasury at the present time." But where D. seems to me to fail most widely is in that he makes no attempt to controvert Mr. Keynes's simple fundamental equation that the income of the community is increased *at least* by the amount of new expenditure put in hand.

To deny that a given expenditure does induce a growing circle of additional expenditure seems to me to be quarrelling with self-evident truth, because each item of expenditure has its counterpart in an equal increase of income for somebody, who is thus in a position to increase either his consumption or his investment in further enterprise. What worries D. mostly is that the additional income, instead of being spent on consumption or capital goods, will be hoarded. There are several methods of insuring against such a possibility. One is to make hoarding unprofitable; another, to make investment profitable; and a third method brings us face to face with J. A. Hobson's theory of redistribution, which can best be secured in accordance with the formula: "the rich won't spend enough; the Government must." Money must reach the pockets of those who are so starved of the necessaries of life that they will put it into circulation at once, or else the money must reach them already profitably spent in the form of cheap houses, education, public amenities and social services. To make hoarding unprofitable we must keep down the bank rate, taking advantage of the contemporary fact that nobody is likely to jump from the frying-pan into the fire by sending his investments abroad.

In order to encourage enterprise we must increase "confidence." Confidence in what? This word has been used to death during this crisis, but few have attempted to define what is the "confidence" which enterprise needs. I am sure that deep down in his heart no entrepreneur is worried by such myths as gold reserves, the gold standard or the balancing of the budget. The "confidence" which enterprise wants is confidence in the saleability of its output at a profit, and how are we going to get this if everybody preaches economy?

Mr. Keynes says in his pamphlet, "some cynics conclude that nothing except a war can bring a major slump to its conclusion, for hitherto war has been the only object of governmental loan expenditure on a large scale which governments have considered respectable. In all the issues of peace they are deemed overcautious, half-hearted, without perseverance and determination, thinking of a loan as a liability and not as a link in the transformation of the community's surplus resources, which will otherwise be wasted, into useful capital assets." There are millions of people in this world whose minds have fastened upon this arresting philosophical proposition. It is a pity that D. should not have found it worthy of his attention.

P. J. M. LARRANAGA

## LABOUR POLICY

SIR,—Mr. G. D. H. Cole's article, "Labour's Opportunity," was indeed an excellent piece of constructive criticism, and one which most workers in the Labour Party could thoroughly endorse, from personal experience, I feel sure.

The Labour movement is top-heavy with Trade Union elements, which have not shaken off the dust of the old Liberal-Radical days, and therefore make the work of the post-war Socialist very heavy going indeed. I believe that the Labour Party offers the only constructive alternative to capitalism, and unless we are prepared to work within its ranks, whatever our ultimate goal may be, *now*, we shall have failed to have learned the lesson from recent events in Germany. If the working classes do not strain every nerve to obtain a Parliamentary majority at the next general election the opportunity may never come again, for this generation, to attempt to put Socialism into being, let alone overthrow the old order of society. But if the Labour Party wishes to gather support it must define very quickly its attitude on what might be termed fundamental issues, particularly Disarmament, Nationalisation (what industries it intends to start with), security for the working class against poverty and disease, and so on.

We do not want another *Labour and the Nation*, but we do want a concise, authoritative statement, endorsed by annual conference, which will help the humble propagandists in their day-to-day work to face a hostile audience with confidence, and advocate that the Labour Party is the only alternative government to the type now in office, and here is the policy which it intends to pursue if put into power. This would win far more support than can be obtained at present, when excuses have to be found for the Means Test and the feeble attitude on India and Disarmament.

R. MAYNARD BENNETT

4 Addington Road, Sittingbourne, Kent.

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SIR,—THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is, so far as I am aware, the first periodical in this country to answer, and answer conclusively, an article by a distinguished contributor the week *before* his article appears. Yet your note on "Fascism and British Labour," in your issue of April 1st, in which you tell us that "leadership could scarcely fall lower" than it had in the "Dictatorship *v.* Democracy" Manifesto of the Labour Party, appears to me to provide a complete answer to the case made by Mr. G. D. H. Cole in your issue of April 8th.

Mr. Cole considers that the Labour Party is entirely right, not only, as you do, in having refused the offer of the united front, but in having "repudiated all ambition to play the dictator," and having affirmed "as strongly as it likes its belief in constitutional and parliamentary means of attaining to power."

What is wrong with the Labour Party, he says, is not its belief that Socialism can be established in Britain by parliamentary means, and without a working class dictatorship, but that its internal organisation is defective. What must be done is to give the young members of the party more power, to give the constituary parties more, and the Trade Unions less, voting power at annual conferences, "to amend its methods of selecting candidates and, above all, to install at Transport House a body of men who will be less fearful of criticism than eager to enlist the new forces of to-day and to-morrow in the party's support."

This amounts to a demand for no change of policy, but a complete change of leadership. And this is surely a very extraordinary demand. What evidence is there that, given the present basis of policy, which Mr. Cole so unhesitatingly accepts, he or anyone else will carry it out any better than the present leaders?

Surely you, Sir, are right when you ask for "a plan of action" alternative to the united front, "in face of the Fascist reaction," as "the only way of saving the unity of the movement"? Indeed, if such a plan of action were developed, would not Mr. Cole's provisos about the age limit to the League of Youth and the personnel of Transport House become insignificant? But does not a plan of action—and I presume you mean action to-day, not action three years hence after a hypothetical general election—imply at any rate some scepticism of an absolute reliance on parliamentary elections and nothing else for the achievement of a Socialist Britain?

After all, what could "a plan of action in face of the Fascist reaction" be? Could it be anything else but such things as the mobilisation of the British working class for two objects? First, for practical assistance to their German comrades. Such assistance would take the form of, for example, a great relief fund, organised by the whole Labour and Trade Union movement for the support of the victims of Hitler, and by the offer to print and publish the German working class press now made permanently illegal, in the same way as the German Social Democrats, for many years, printed the Russian party's press before the war? Secondly, could a "plan of action" be anything but the initiation of action against those things which, it is universally admitted, are to-day pressing with ever-increasing weight upon the British working class? Above all, of course, this would mean a serious and thoroughgoing campaign against the Means Test, by unemployed demonstrations and marches, by simultaneous one-day protest strikes in their support, by the universal refusal of Labour Councillors to administer, and such measures. Can anyone seriously doubt that the Labour Party and the Trade Unions, with their powerful machinery, could by such action, carried through with real determination, make the working of the Means Test impossible within six months? Equally important, of course, would be the reversal of the whole present policy of the Trade Unions, which is to-day, almost avowedly, one of slow retreat before the growing necessities of capitalism.

Is there the least doubt that the initiation of a plan of action of this kind, and not the substitution of a different personnel in Transport House, is the Labour Party's real opportunity? Is there the least doubt about it that action of this sort, and not organisational reforms, is the only thing that can possibly rally the forces of youth, which, as Mr. Cole admits, are sadly unenthusiastic about the Labour Party to-day?

If what, alas! is inconceivable were to happen, and the Labour Party and T.U.C. were to take action of this kind I am quite sure that few would complain if they preferred to ignore the I.L.P. and the Communist Party. As you, Sir, well say, "the issue is the destruction of the working class movement throughout Europe." That is an issue which transcends party labels almost as much as it transcends organisational reform and personal replacements at Transport House.

EX-LABOUR M.P.

## "SEXUAL REFORM"

SIR,—Your remarks about the League for Sexual Reform encourage me to air my opinion that that excellent body, with whose aims I am in complete sympathy, is absurdly misnamed. I do not question that mankind in general would be none the worse for a little "sexual reform" (which means, on the face of it, reform in sexual behaviour); but that is not the point or purpose of the League, which aims rather at the emancipation of sex from the gross, cruel, and legally sanctioned superstitions that adhere to it. "The League for Sexual Reform" might be the name of any Vigilance Society or Busybodies' Brigade. Is it too late to persuade Dr. Haire and his associates to adopt a more accurate and expressive title? I would suggest "The League for Sex Emancipation."

GERALD BULLETT

Harting.

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SIR,—Owing to the raising of various far-fetched, but arguable, legal objections, it is doubtful, as you suggest, if the operation of sterilisation is permissible except (like abortion) on serious therapeutic grounds. That is why eugenists are supporting a Bill to legalise the voluntary sterilisation of feeble-minded persons who are fit to be at large. But such an Act would, by implication, definitely make the operation illegal except on therapeutic or mental deficiency grounds! I have consequently been urging that an effort should first be made to get a Government pronouncement that the operation is legal like the other methods of contraception.

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

171 Queen's Gate, S.W.7.

## THE DICKENS OF A BUSINESS

SIR,—Mr. Cadbury's letter on the coupon controversy is a very clever one. But, as it is out of the question to suggest that he should be trying to confuse the issue, one can only presume that he is himself confused about it.

He says that the coupon system is of the same "economic genus" as the Co-operative dividend. Of course it is. But because things are of the same "economic genus" it does not necessarily follow that they should both be governed by the same ethical principles. Dealing in stocks and shares is of the same "economic genus" as playing baccarat, for instance.

The objection to the coupon system is *entirely* in the "*gifts*," so called. No one, not even the staunchest champion of the

Coupon Bill, wants to stop the coupon as a coupon. What is required is to abolish the "*gift*" and to make the coupon redeemable either in cash or in an ascertainable quantity of the same commodity as the one with which it is given.

As regards Mr. Cadbury's "limitations," I would like to point out:

(*a*) That the disturbing of the economics of mass production is one of the strongest arguments against the coupon system. As and when every manufacturer is compelled to adopt coupon methods in order to compete with his rivals, so these economics tend to become more and more upset.

(*b*) Mr. Cadbury says that the gifts cannot extend to things which are perishable or difficult of delivery. The force of the first argument does not seem very clear, and, if anything, appears to be against the coupon, as the coupon itself usually accompanies a perishable article. And nowadays what is "difficult of delivery"?—only things like elephants and grand pianos.

(*c*) The opponents of coupons claim that, so far from competing with other forms of advertising, they increase them, as the "gifts" have to be extensively advertised in addition to the primary commodity.

I would also like to point out to Mr. Cadbury that there are a quarter of a million insured workers unemployed in the distributive trades, and that those people in the distributive trades who have made a study of the subject attribute an important proportion of this unemployment to coupon gift trading which, even if it does not aim at, has the effect of short-circuiting the retailer. As Mr. Cadbury correctly says, "The system is . . . in direct competition as a method of distribution with other methods of retailing"! *i.e.*, it is the inexpert distribution of commodities which is throwing grit into the distributive machinery of the country.

HERBERT R. MARSH
*General Secretary*
The Stationers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland,

## CAVE DRAWINGS

SIR,—Mr. Richard Hughes's theory of the origin of cave drawings is hardly new. In 1894 Mr. Rudyard Kipling published the story of Ung.

"Later he pictured an aurochs—later he pictured a bear,
Pictured the sabre-tooth tiger dragging a man to his lair,
Pictured the mountainous mammoth, hairy, abhorrent, alone,
Out of the love that he bore them, scriving them clearly on bone."

It is true that Ung's father suggested mercenary motives, but all reasonable anthropologists will give Mr. Hughes credit for believing in his theory, and will not suspect him of putting it forth merely as the basis of a smart essay.

RICHARD BURN
9 Staverton Road, Oxford.

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SIR,—May I trespass once more on your space in order to support Mr. Richard Hughes against "Martini's" objections?

The representation of women is known in palaeolithic art, both in painting and in sculpture, though it is less frequently met with than the representations of animals of the chase. Statuettes of women were common in the Aurignacian culture, and paintings of them are found in the rock shelters of the later "East Spanish School." The former are distinguished by the exaggerated expression of the sexual characteristics and are always nude, while the latter show tall, thin figures of women, wearing rude clothing, who, in some cases, seem to be dancing round a nude figure of a man.

It has been suggested that the representations of the human form were connected with sympathetic magic for the purpose of the increase of the tribe, and occurred, therefore, at such times as an increase was desirable—say, for defence—and economically convenient owing to the plentifulness of the food supply.

It is conceivable that such drawings could not receive social sanction for public exhibition, even in palaeolithic times, except when the needs of the community seemed to demand it, and that the man who wished to satisfy his lust in the act of drawing might have to content himself with the tracings of a stick in the sand. Probably drawings of this type have always been done—witness the walls of the courtesan quarters at Pompeii—but it is improbable that the lust motive alone could give them artistic significance.

May I take this opportunity of asking you to correct the error in the spelling of my name last week?

DIANA M. LALL

## GEORGE GISSING'S *BY THE IONIAN SEA*

SIR,—You would do me a favour if you would allow me, through the medium of your columns, to disclaim all responsibility for an introduction which has been attached to a reprint of George Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea*, recently issued by Messrs. Jonathan Cape. This introduction was inserted without my knowledge or consent, and I am, therefore, in no way answerable for the errors which it contains.

A. C. GISSING

## THE REAL DAVID COPPERFIELD

SIR,—I don't mind your Mr. Stonier punning on my surname with inimitable Dickens' feebleness, and I can't be bothered to correct at length his wilful mis-statements about the general character of my book. But I can and do protest against his dishonesty in printing two parallel passages from Dickens and myself to show how many master-strokes I have left out, and then proving his point by misquotation. The waiter's hair, pimples, cheerfulness and arm akimbo as he peered up at the ale occur in my version as well as in Dickens. As for my modification of the scene, this was, of course, made necessary by Dickens' carelessness. He strayed for the moment into an imitation of Smollett, forgetting that David was not a Smollett half-wit hero but a very sharp little boy, and that the waiter would not have taken him in by so crude and unqualified a story. Moreover "He came in here—ordered a glass of this ale—*would* order it—drank it, and fell dead" is not like this friendly waiter at all, but Jingle gulling Pickwick, and quite out of key.

ROBERT GRAVES

[Mr. Stonier writes: I find that in quoting from *The Real David Copperfield* I made one slip and the printer another. In l. 7 the words "with one elbow a-kimbo," and at the end of l. 24 a full-stop, were omitted. I gladly restore them. The waiter's hair and pimples had already been transposed by Mr. Graves to an earlier sentence, and do not appear on the page from which I quoted. I do not know this waiter personally and cannot dispute Mr. Graves's suggestion that his conversation is not like him.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

## RHODES

SIR,—Dr. Alice Werner asks who told Mr. Raymond Mortimer that Africans are cruel, and says Lobengula was "not typical." Why not? In Northern Rhodesia, for example, the Awemba chiefs mutilated their subjects in countless ways for felonies, misdemeanours, and *lèse-majesté*. (One chief thatched a hut with women's breasts; and, of course, all the victims bled to death.) That African natives were cruel is the conviction of at least "one candid person who really knows the African" (as Dr. Werner herself has kindly testified).

But, Sir, I have a bigger bone to pick. Dr. Werner says she has not changed the views she expressed in your forbear *The Speaker* in 1896, that "Rhodes undid the work of Livingstone." Some people never learn, but they should not vaunt their inability to learn. Rhodes's methods would, at times, have pained Livingstone; they even pained Rhodes; but the two Rhodesias to-day provide good evidence that Rhodes, and his high ideals (and these were uppermost in the inner man) which survive in his North, has crowned the work of the great missionary-explorer, not undone it.

Caterham Valley.

FRANK MELLAND

# Miscellany

## RED PALMER

I HAVE always looked upon myself as an unfortunate man rather than a fortunate one. I have, it is true, sometimes been called fortunate; but, staring back over my life, the episodes and occurrences of fortune appear rather too much like lifebuoys flung to me as I struggled in flooded rivers of disaster. For your really fortunate man is always on the bank, and doesn't need any lifebuoys.

I repeat that I have been unfortunate, and because I have been unfortunate I have come to couple my name with misfortune; and now I am sitting down to tell the story of a fishing fly, named with my name, and the most fascinating and unlucky fly I ever switched over the nose of a trout. Actually,

I suppose, it is not a fly, though fishing-tackle dealers call it a fly, and even the dry-fly purist indulgently allows it to figure as a fly. It is the Palmer Fly, named after the Palmer Worm, a hairy caterpillar, a loathsome thing of exquisite beauty. There are three chief angler's patterns, the Red Palmer, the Soldier Palmer, and the Black Palmer. But the Red Palmer is the one I have generally fished with, a creature which I now think I shall never fish with again. The Red Palmer (sometimes called Peacock Palmer) is really not quite red, and is made from the ruddy shining feather of a cock hackled over a body of glossy bronze or greenish peacock herl (*i.e.*, a strand from the great fantail eyed feather of a peacock). The Soldier Palmer, which is violently red, is made from the same feather, but the hackle strands are sometimes allowed to stick out all the way down the body, which is made of bright red wool or silk ribbed with gilt wire. The Red Palmer seems to be taken by the trout for a small ruddy beetle, and probably competes with the coch-y-bondhu. The Soldier Palmer is probably taken for what it is, a brilliant hairy caterpillar, or perhaps a boiled shrimp. But as trout don't boil their fresh-water shrimps it is more likely that they take it for a little red worm with whiskers. The Black Palmer I have rarely, if ever, fished with, and don't know much about it, save that there are two main dressings, one imitating a black hairy caterpillar, and the other a black shiny beetle. The Soldier Palmer I like, but I have always put less faith in it than in the Red Palmer, for it looks so gaudy and military. But a very small Red Palmer is clearly one of the very best flies a lucky angler can use in blazing sunshine on a thin clear water. Indeed, I think it is the very best fly of a thousand artificial flies to dap with. When I first tried that fly I was a schoolboy, living in Wharfedale. It was not a local fly, but one or two got into my hands from somewhere, and impressed by its possibilities I decided one sun-blazing, impossible afternoon to go fishing with it. Nobody save a boy or a fool would have thought of fly-fishing on such an afternoon. But I was out to break the record, and in a most original manner, for as soon as I got down to the gin-clear water softly flowing between the Grass Woods I scooped a leaden pellet out of my waistcoat pocket and fastened it to the gut line which was attached to the fly. The leaden pellet was to steady the line and keep it away from the bank. But it was very oblique angling, and I knew quite well that if any local fisher had been passing he'd have shaken his head at me and said, "What art tha doin' wi' yon thing? Tha'll catch nowt wi' yon. It isn't a bluebottle." For I was jabbing both fists into all local piscatorial convention by preparing to dap with an artificial fly.

But nobody passed to laugh at me, and so I crouched down on a high bank between two trees and poked the rod out. The fly, steadied by the leaden pellet just above it, dropped beautifully into the water, where I proceeded to waggle it about, or rather to make it dimple the surface of the water. As it happened a fat trout of over half a pound presently saw it, and, getting curious, sailed up to it. After inspecting it for a moment he opened his mouth and seized it with quiet determination. I immediately tightened the line and the trout was hooked. He swam off towards the middle of the river at a great speed, pulling the line off the reel as he went; but, as I was fishing with gut instead of the weaker-pulling local horsehair, I didn't waste much time in playing him, and soon had him splashing weakly below my feet. But now the real difficulty began, for the landing-net wouldn't reach him, and as I wasn't nimble enough to climb swiftly down the high bank I relinquished the net, and proceeded to scratch my head with my free hand, wondering what to do. There seemed nothing for it but to lift him out. This I tried, but the twelve-foot rod bent double (it was a wickedly flexible rod) and the trout kicked in the air a foot above the water. Thinking he was going to break either rod or gut I dropped him, which meant that I had to play him all over again, though only within a circle of three yards diameter. As soon as he was quiet I again tried the lifting process, but with the same result. Finally he got off; for he had been rather too lightly hooked to stand all that jerking and pulling. I ran home with a distressing tale.

A few years afterwards I was privileged to fish in a large pond in Cornwall which contained trout and nothing else. They spawned in a little stream running into the pond, and therefore there was a goodly quantity of them. But they were small, at any rate those I caught were small, rarely more than pilchard size, and I had not much success. All this fishing was done in the evening, when they rose fairly well to the flies blown from the trees and brought down by the stream. But I grew disgusted with this evening fishing, and thought I'd try an earlier part of the day; though on the morning I set off for the pond the sun was shining brightly and the sky was hot and blue. Manifestly a very bad day. But on the side opposite to the one from which I threw my flies there were bushes and shady trees where an angler could crouch concealed, and dap. I bethought me of my little adventure in Wharfedale, and turning over the flannel leaves of my fly-book found just the right size of Red Palmer, and on an eyed hook. Again two yards of fairly strong gut and a leaden pellet to steady it. Again I pushed the rod out as of yore, but this time I kept further back from the bank (which was low) and fished nearer the side. I dapped and dapped. But nothing happened. Then suddenly, just as I was giving up hope, there was a light swirl in the water where my fly was making dimples, and I knew that a really big fellow had seized it. I didn't see him as I struck, but his yellow-brown, marvellously speckled side was quite clear to me as he went off at a great rate towards the other side of the pond, a trout of two pounds or more. But just before he reached the other side he turned and came back swiftly towards my feet. I was a fool to let the line get slack as I did; I ought to have dragged it in with my hand, but I knew nothing of that dodge in those days—the only possible thing to do if you can't reel up fast enough. So the big trout got under the bank at my feet, from which place nothing would stir him. I reeled up and pulled rather hard, for the gut was not the finest, and I knew it would not snap so long as the rod-top was springing. But neither fish nor fly would come out of that hiding place. Letting the line go slack didn't help either. Nor did poking about under the bank with the handle of the landing net. If the trout felt the poking he felt it as a sort of tickling and was thrilled with delight. This kind of thing, pulling and slacking and poking, went on for a long time, till I was bored to death. Finally, the angel which watches over the lives of fishes, but which is too often the Devil which whispers in the ears of anglers, said to me in a tempting voice, "I am afraid that trout has slipped away. He has got off, and your fly has caught in those little reeds or in some hidden snag. You'll stand there for ever, and never get any lunch or anything to eat ever again if you continue these tactics till the line gets free. So just lay the rod down on the bank and feel with your hand."

I listened to the voice of the Tempter and put my hand in the water and felt, wetting my sleeve. I tried to get my hand down to the fly but couldn't reach it. I took hold of the gut just above the fly and gave it the feeblest pull, to realise, oh, oaths and curses! that my trout was still on, and that *he knew*. There was a determined wriggle, and the line came back in my hand without the fly. For, released from the spring of the rod the gut had broken like a strand of human hair. As I stared at the end of it I realised with anguish that the trout would have been mine with a little more patience. It was the biggest trout I had ever hooked, and I danced about on the bank like a person demented.

It has always been like that. Red Palmer never caught me a decent fish, as far as I can remember. I have caught thousands of trout in my time, most of them with the artificial fly, and very many hundreds of good-sized ones; but Red Palmer is right out of it. I go away with a fair supply of Red Palmers every summer holiday (if I can afford a summer holiday) and come back without any, or with only just one. The trout have taken them. The big fellows love them, but they always snap them off. It doesn't matter what kind of

gut I tie the fly to, it always goes. If there are trees in the way instead of trout, I get " hung up " in one of them—losing Red Palmer in some inaccessible branch. But the worst defaulters are the trout. If I could push a tarred rope through the narrow eye of the hook I suppose they would break that off. The number of trout I have lost on Red Palmer would feed a besieged city for a week. No! that is slight exaggeration. Yet I think that their succulent flesh would relieve something of the starving inhabitants' distress.

One blazing day last holidays, fishing that rough tearing water of the Swale just above Muker foot-bridge, I was broken by what I think was the best trout of the season. Red Palmer was the tail-fly, and it alighted beautifully from a long line into the head of a rush of water just below a big boulder. A sudden rise and check, and the trout snapped it off. Just think of that!—the beast broke me from up-stream when the whole force of the current was pouring down to me to prevent me from being broken. Broke me just after I had carefully tied that fly on to gut that I felt convinced was reliable. It was incomprehensible.

I won't say that I have never caught trout with Red Palmer, for I once caught a dozen, fishing it dry-fly style in a drought-smitten mountain stream that had been slightly coloured by a thunderstorm. But they were all small, not one above a quarter of a pound. And they caused a lot of trouble at the inn. Some trippers the landlady didn't like, commandeered them all for breakfast. Perhaps I had been weak and half yielded the trout to them the night before. But the landlady thought she ought to have been considered first, and that no very goodwill went with my offering. They were my trout and hers. The trippers should not have seduced me into yielding them. She woke me up next morning, stamping and banging about in her clogs, and scolding in her hard, tough, rasping Yorkshire voice. I seem to remember the exact words that floated up to me. " Impudent folk! Yon feesh wurn't fur them. Aye! I'll wak 'em oop. Sooch manners. An' one of them wants a coop o'tay i' bed! Don't tha gan oop with it to her, Mary Anne." I remember her so well, that noisy, kindly, harsh, diligent, grasping, generous, jealous, just-minded frowsy female of an innkeeper—for she was all that; half out of Wuthering Heights, and half out of some Book of Saints. She gave me good times when I stayed at her inn, for she was always so sympathetic and attentive; but that morning she was not quite discreet. I felt embarrassed when I went down to breakfast. The trippers were eating the trout, but seemed a little upset. Things were all wrong inside me as well as out. And it was all the fault of that wretched little devil—Red Palmer.

With Soldier Palmer it has always been pretty much the same. It is true that I have included it in my short list of flies to be used in the River Ahr, of Germany, though I seem to remember enough about it to associate it with disaster rather than with success.

What shall I do? Never try to seduce trout with either of those two bloody little flies again? Aye! what shall I do about it? Sign the pledge and join the Communists? Perhaps they will tell me in Moscow.

HERBERT E. PALMER

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### The Rats of Norway

It is a pity that Miss Gladys Cooper has begun her cheaper-seats policy at the Playhouse with a play so pretentious as *The Rats of Norway*. A pity, too, that the author, Mr. Keith Winter, who has certain distinct merits, should have deceived himself about the importance of his theme and characters. A couple of twisted love affairs at a boys' prep. school, unless the protagonists are taller than mediocrity, call for no such agonies of expression as they are allotted here. Stated baldly, the facts are that Jane Clayton, supercilious, self-centred and bored with her headmaster-husband, has an affair with Sebastian, a brilliant assistant-master who is otherwise busy drinking himself to death and being rude to everybody, on those familiar *fin-de-guerre* principles which seem to fascinate the younger playwrights. One feels somehow that Sebastian has been too long at this pastime of his—fourteen years of emptiness should have left him with either far more or far less balance than he possesses. At all events, he proposes an elopement which Jane very prudently refuses, goes hysterical, and dies on her bed. Whereupon Jane writhes unhappily on the carpet before wantonly revealing her infidelity to her husband. Neither Mr. Massey nor Miss Cooper can make this stuff convincing or particularly interesting. The main attractions of the piece are a grimly capable presentation of a hopelessly unhappy love affair between two of the younger members of the staff (Lawrence Olivier is particularly good) and a really brilliant caricature of a healthy, hearty, insufferable headmaster by Mr. Cecil Parker.

### Oh, To Be a Pirate King!

Bobby Bramstone in the peace of his ancestral home longs for adventure—the thrill of a life at sea, but, one gathers, rather the armchair variety than the real thing. However, in his dream in the next act he becomes his ancestor Robert Brimstone, captain of a pirate ship. In *He Wanted Adventure* at the Saville, Bobby Howes has turned *Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure* into musical comedy and gives us another success. He is as impish as ever and this quality is never lost—not even in a pirate's hat and sea boots. There are some good musical numbers, especially the pirate's song and chorus, though " Smile and Be Bright," the Boy Scout's song led by Mr. Wylie Watson, does not hit the mark as " Sing, Brothers " did in *Tell Her the Truth*. I was sorry that Mr. Watson did not have much opportunity for displaying the vocal powers of the " amateur tenor." His dry wit, however, was excellent. Mr. Raymond Newell and Miss Marie Burke are a clever pair of accomplices, and Miss Judy Gunn plays the heroine very prettily.

### At the Academy

Paul Czinner's *Der Träumende Mund*, which was reviewed in these columns when it was shown to the Film Society in January, has now gone into the programme at the Academy. It is an exceptionally good film, in the tradition of the early German silent films, and Elisabeth Bergner's performance is magnificent. I do not think that this actress has been seen in England before, and everyone should take the chance of seeing her now. The German dialogue is helped out with English titles.

### Mr. Arliss's Tricks

It needs all the distinguished variety and ingenuity of Mr. George Arliss to keep the *King's Vacation* going at the Regal. Mr. Arliss plays the part of a monarch *plus à gauche que les gauches*, who precipitates a bloodless revolution at the psychological moment, abdicates, goes to live in France, marries off his daughter to a member of the class-conscious proletariat, seeks privacy, and with difficulty finds it. Despite his self-sacrifice and devotion to the interests of the working-class, Mr. Arliss apparently carries off a larger proportion of the national treasure than usually falls into the pocket of exiled monarchs. The economics of the film are very weak all through. There is little to be said for *A King's Vacation*, but Mr. Arliss goes through his tricks with all his usual suavity, and this will probably be enough for most people.

## THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, April 14th—
" Messiah," Royal Choral Society, Albert Hall, 2.30.
Bach Concert, New Symphony Orchestra, Palladium, 3.15.
Parsifal Concert, B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Henry Wood, Queen's Hall, 7.30.

SATURDAY, April 15th—
Conference of New Ideals in Education, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Till April 20th.

MONDAY, April 17th—
Opening of Session of Shakespeare's Plays, New Memorial Theatre, Stratford. Till September 9th.

TUESDAY, April 18th—
" Let Sleeping Dogs Lie," Gate Theatre.

WEDNESDAY, April 19th—
" The Soldier and the Gentlewoman," Vaudeville Theatre.
" The Voice," Kingsway Theatre.

THURSDAY, April 20th—
Dr. Julius F. Hecker on " Religion in Russia." Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
L. A. G. Strong on " The Enjoyment of Novels," B.B.C., 7.30.
" The Brontës," Royalty Theatre.

# Current Literature

## BOOKS IN GENERAL

KING LEAR was very wise when he abdicated from the throne and became dependent on charity, and rich, powerful old men cannot be urged too strongly to follow his example. While he ruled he was hated, and was so uncomfortable that he had to devise ridiculous tests of his daughters' love. And the readers of the correspondence between Regan and Goneril, in Maurice Baring's *Dead Letters*, know what a nuisance he was when he tried to keep up the state of a king and went visiting with fifty knights in his train. It was only when he was destitute and became an object of charity that his bombast and his egotism became transmuted into beautiful and splendid qualities. The present is an age of King Lears; there can never have been more of them scattered about the world than at the present moment. The Russian, Austrian, Spanish and Turkish aristocracies have supplied them in hundreds; there must be many among the German Princes, while recently the slump has recruited their ranks from American ex-millionaires. It is to be hoped that every one of these lightning-blasted oaks has his Cordelia, a plant of ivy which has come to support the decayed ruins of the tree to which it clings. Nothing is more encouraging, when one has oneself reached middle-age, than to see the eager charity of the young and, particularly if one is a man, the charity and love of young women for old men. And it is a comfort to find how age lends a charm to many qualities which are by no means always charming in the young. A wicked eye, a strong disposition to sin, a reckless, lying tongue, a passionate love of life, and of the world, and an overwhelming conceit of oneself make men and women fascinating at eighty; at eighteen they must be studiously concealed. The old have only to be themselves and to keep up their vitality.

* * *

Miss Stella Benson found her Lear in the free hospital at Hong Kong and *Pull Devil, Pull Baker* (Macmillan, 7*s.* 6*d.*) is the result of her collaboration with Count Nicholas de Toulouse Lautrec de Savine K.M., ex-Tsar of Bulgaria. In these words she introduces him:

> I was a ghost to him from the first. "I have ever been a great admirer of ladies," he said, looking through me at be-bustled, be-fanned, be-diamonded frou-frou memories, as I arrived in a damp mackintosh and muddy shoes at his bedside. With his white beard he tickled the pages of an album. ". . . This is a portrait of the Princesse de ——, lady of royal blood, who was crasy of me in Vienna," he said, indicating a photograph—clipped from a newspaper—of a female face with an oblong dimness over the mouth, entitled *Get rid of that film, You can see the difference in three days.* . . . "This is my dear, lovely Marie, the *prima ballerina*"; he had scratched out the printed name and written: "Marie my dear tru sweatheart—O Womens, the perl of the Nature." "Two million roubles," he said, "have I spent on ladies in my life." . . . "The food is not fit for gentlemen stomach here, madame. Only fit for common loo class men stomach." There was a stirring among the loo class men in all the beds within earshot. Oh, how tired his fellow-paupers were of the sound of that bold old voice! "Lend me some money, madame, please, to buy some fruit for my sick stomach. I have not a cent. . . ." He turned the pocket of the tartan infirmary dressing gown inside out to show that he had not a cent—and from it two dollars fifty fell loudly to the floor. "Not a cent," repeated the Count, firmly, replacing it in his pocket. . . . Even while he lives on charity, in mission hospitals, he feels himself a giver, not a taker. He is an honoured guest, privileged to complain of the food and to press succulent beardy kisses on the reluctant chaste hands of lady almoners. "Send news of my stay here to the newspapers—it will make Grand Sansation." . . . And now he comes jauntily down the steps, reborn as a literary man.

* * *

It is as Miss Benson says, an unnatural collaboration. The Count's stories innocently pursue their course, and in alternate paragraphs and chapters the Devil comes and pulls them to bits for our amusement. For a moment I wondered: But who will give this old Casanova a library at Drax to write his memoirs in? Then I perceived that he belonged to the tribe of indefatigable scribblers who are as destitute of literary merit as they are of everything else. With their stubby pencil scrawls and smelly exercise books, and poems written on toilet-paper, these old creatures are far more irritating to a writer than to any ordinary man or woman. So that, without the Devil's help, there would have been no readers even for the *Loving Story of Lili, the Noty Gerl.* But as it is there are two dangers which the ingenuous reader will find it difficult to avoid. First he will ask himself at every moment what basis of truth there may be for the Count's stories and will rush madly to consult the Almanach de Gotha and every History he can find. Secondly, he will begin passing moral judgments; not on the Baker (the Count) be it understood. The Count's eighty years have exceeded all statutes of limitations, but it is impossible to shut one's eyes to his collaborator's treachery. Occasionally, when one imagines oneself inside the Count's skin, this becomes distinctly painful, and such moralisings must be chased away by the following reflections. The Count has been deceived by women all his life. If Miss Stella Benson had been scrupulously faithful we should never have heard of him at all. Like Menelaus, he has won immortality owing to a *crooky womens.* Like Helen, we may hope that she will return to her allegiance. But while Helen's betrayal was of an old-established kind, Miss Stella Benson's is original. Nobody has ever done to another human being quite what she has done here. After the *Loving Story of Lili, the Noty Gerl*, she suddenly tells us the story of the young man who fell in love with the Co-operative stores.

> Pray do not mock me:
> I am a very foolish fond old man,
> Fourscore and upward . . .
> Nor I know not
> Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me,
> For (as I am a man) I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia.

* * *

She calls herself a devil on the headings of the chapters, and she is not a woman at all. She is a pure artist. "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more," she cries to the Count, but the honour of artists is inhuman, it is the honour of Devils, and concerns nothing but their work. It was as an artist that she was attracted by the Count—who is an artist also, whose medium is the spoken Romance. She has no more betrayed him than he has betrayed himself. There has, however, certainly been a struggle between them in this book, and the Baker Count occasionally gets his own back with an unconscious thrust such as:

> But our fielings are more strong as cleaverness.

* * *

In those words he has made the only serious criticism, which is that, though Miss Benson is an artist and this book is a work of art, she falls into the vice which I fancy will mar so much contemporary work for our descendants. She is far too amusing. The need to be either amusing or to be nasty vitiates contemporary social life and contemporary art, and I think these may be the qualities which will give the 'twenties and 'thirties their most characteristic flavour. Miss Stella Benson is not in the least nasty, but she is intensely amusing, so amusing that it is impossible for us to read her without screams of delight and rushing off to read aloud choice passages to each other. That is all very well until a generation comes along which does not wish to be amused by works of art. It may want some other flavour. In the present case she would have found it difficult to write without being amusing about the Count. I do not know whether it would have been possible for her, or anyone living now, to be serious in dealing with him. She would, of course, have to have written it all herself and to have left him out completely. But lovely and delightful and bloodcurdling as this book is, I wish that she had tried. She could have been just as devilish and just as cruel if she had been grimly serious. It is not on humane grounds that I make the suggestion. DAVID GARNETT

# NEW NOVELS

**The Magic Circle.** By PATRICK MILLER. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7s. 6d.

**The Wooden Doctor.** By MARGIAD EVANS. *Blackwell.* 7s. 6d.

**Martin's Summer.** By VICKI BAUM. 7s. 6d.

**Limited Variety.** By MARGARET DALE. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

**Pond Hall's Progress.** By H. W. FREEMAN. *Chatto.* 7s. 6d.

George Moore, with that psychological acuteness which so few of his critics are prepared to allow him, remarks in one of his autobiographical volumes that "the charm of family life is its intensity." He should have added that intensity is also its bane; the observer who, coming from outside, attempts to penetrate an interwoven family group very often experiences a thrill of dread, such as might descend on him in a tropical forest. Isolated trees and small coppices are not unfriendly; it is the impenetrable lushness of family life, the aroma of stifling intimacy it is apt to exhale—something about it both purposeful and wildly purposeless—that makes him pine for the bare uplands of individualism. The adventure may be disagreeable in fact; in the realms of contemporary fiction it is doubly stultifying.

Most novelists lose control of their own brood. The writer who undertakes a family novel seems to begin by thrusting into the earth a few hopeful and dissimilar-looking shrubs, methodically distinguished one from another. They are inclined to grow faster than he expects; not only do they rise and spread with savage rapidity, propagating as they develop like ambitious banyans, but before long a certain fundamental sameness is manifest through the entire extent of the plantation. Thus the Forsytes resemble suckers of a single rose-tree. It is very seldom that one meets a novelist with sufficient skill to maintain the separate identity of several characters, if his characters are related by ties of blood. But Mr. Miller, strange to say, in *The Magic Circle*, has accomplished this considerable feat.

His personages are heterogeneous, though allied. He calls his book "A Story of Two Families," and proceeds to show us how two commonplace family groups, interlocked by the marriage of daughter and son—Hugh Beamer is married to Hilda Forby—are affected by the threat of a newspaper scandal. That catastrophe is the weakest part of the narrative; having postulated the solidarity of their family life—old Forby, nevertheless, has cut and run—and the mingled sympathy and antagonism that binds them together, the novelist must provide some external strain that bears heavily upon the intersecting circles. It is unfortunate that he should have chosen violent death; it is still more unfortunate that the chief actors in the tragedy should be as improbable as Mr. Joachim and Peter Synge. The young dramatist is too flimsy to commit manslaughter, the elderly rake too unreal ever to die.

But die he must, and Peter Synge must face the coroner's court. Poor Peter, he is so vague and withal so charming, so palpably in need of a woman's care, that I admit having harboured a faint suspicion that his creator might belong to the opposite sex. At all events, he is decorative rather than plausible; Rendle Forby, on the other hand, and Hugh Beamer, with old Mr. Beamer, that benevolent busybody, who means so well and creates havoc wherever he goes, are not only in themselves extremely convincing but are placed in convincing juxtaposition. We understand Hugh's affection for his father, which comes very near wrecking his marriage, and we grasp the machinery of Rendle's tragic defeat. He has taken one step beyond the circle; Mr. Beamer frightens him back within its circumference.

*The Magic Circle* is apparently a second book; solidly and carefully written from beginning to end, the texture of the prose is not unsatisfying. One cannot claim as much for *The Wooden Doctor*. Imagine Charlotte Brontë in a delirium, haunted by the memory of M. Héger and the love he had so prosily turned aside, expressing herself with irregular and brutal frankness. John Flaherty is Héger to the life; a wiry, ill-looking little man, he fascinates Arabella by his detachment and a certain tough masculine insensibility. She pursues; he recedes before her advance. *The Wooden Doctor* is a story of hopeless passion; not for a moment is Arabella happy; not for a moment, except in a new love affair—and that itself is undermined by her original love—can she forget ache and dreariness of thwarted longing. Told throughout in the first person, it is a poignant and uncomfortable book to read.

Some may disapprove of *The Wooden Doctor*. Its harsh sincerity and the extreme clumsiness of the prose style leave an astringent taste on the reader's palate, like the tang that comes from eating bitter crab apples. It follows one into the pages of the next story. *Martin's Summer* is as inoffensive as an acid-drop. I remember thinking, when I read *Grand Hotel*, what an admirable Ufa film it would have made, and how closely it approximated to film technique. There was the same rather macabre German realism, the same balance of major and minor characters, the same quick succession of exciting events. *Grand Hotel* was an ingenious melodrama, if nothing else; while *Martin's Summer* is an ingenuous piece of romanticism, served up with more than Teutonic solemnity.

But Vicki Baum's name is on the title-page, and, here and there, during the course of the sprawling narrative, one notices a trace of her earlier method—for example, her very pleasing descriptive knack. Frauensee is a real place, brightly delineated; whereas Martin, that Adonis among swimming-instructors, Galahad and aquatic gigolo at the same time, whose blonde beauty haunted the dreams of his feminine pupils, is as hard to believe in as, we are asked to imagine, he was hard to woo. Young women fell for him right and left. There was the little girl who had rescued him when he was drowning and afterwards pillowed his weary head on her virginal knees, and there was her mother, the famous actress, with her azure eyelids; there were the waitress, the demi-mondaine and the ravishing twins, as well as several dumpy middle-aged ladies.

*Martin's Summer* is a mild soporific; and the reader of *Limited Variety*, if he is not kept awake by irritation—that must depend on personal temperament—may find that it soon sets him pleasantly nodding. This first novel is as drowsy as the murmur of doves:

> "My darling!" said Rupert.
>
> "Oh, Rupert, angel!" cooed Tansy, "you haven't changed a scrap in the night. You are as lovely now as you were last night."
>
> "Didn't you expect me to be?"
>
> "I didn't know. Several times I've seen people I liked at a dance or somewhere, and then afterwards I haven't liked them at all. I did so hope you wouldn't be like that."
>
> "Well?"
>
> "Of course you're not, my love," Tansy assured him. . . .
>
> They were disturbed some ten minutes later by Alie, who came slowly downstairs.

The amorous dialogue of Rupert and Tansy, taken up at great length on the telephone and flowing on with drawn-out sweetness from page to page, reminds us that Spring is really here. It also helps us to forget—as one is sometimes glad to do—that we are living in the third decade of the twentieth century.

Mr. Freeman insists that we should remember. In his new book he completes the chronicle of a yeoman family, the Brundishes who have lived for generations at Pond Hall. Dick Brundish has served on the Italian front, and there met and married a Lombard peasant-girl whom he brings back to his paternal acres in Suffolk. Times are bad; he loses money and loses heart. Enforced idleness—she is not allowed to work in the fields, as her mother and grandmother had always done—her husband's moody neglect and bouts of drunkenness, drive Teresa to seek a lover in a lettuce-bed. Dick is obliged to mortgage his land. *Pond Hall's Progress*, like *The Portion of the Levites*—a remarkable essay by another novelist on the same theme—illustrates the slow decay of rural society. It is a simple, impressive, solid narrative, not unworthy of *Joseph and His Brethren*.

PETER QUENNELL

# "THIS KEY"

**The True History of Shakespeare's Sonnets.** By LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. *Martin Secker.* 8s. 6d.

Lord Alfred Douglas has written a very interesting book on Shakespeare's Sonnets. This sentence means, I suppose, that the whole subject is very obscure and that I happen to agree with a good deal of what he says. According to Lord Alfred Douglas, only two people have made really useful contributions to the problem of the Sonnets, Butler and Wilde, and here I agree with him. He, first and foremost, takes the view that Mr. W. H. means Mr. William Hews; and no other view is really tenable. He differs from Wilde, who places the Sonnets in the *Romeo and Juliet* period, and agrees with Butler, who places them in the *Love's Labour's Lost* period. He also, more or less, follows Butler in his rearrangement of the order of the Sonnets in the quarto. These two last theories are both ingenious, though not, I think, finally convincing. As Lord Alfred Douglas says himself, the Sonnets are "the high top-gallant" of poetry, and it is doubtful

if Shakespeare was capable of perhaps the best poetry even he ever wrote at such an early date. The versification, too, recalls the *Romeo and Juliet*, and in some cases even a later period. The early dating enabled Butler most ingeniously to make the Sonnet:

Not mine own fears nor the prophetic soul

refer to the Armada, a very clever suggestion, which has always seemed to me highly doubtful. Of course, it is possible that Shakespeare regarded the defeat of the Armada primarily as ensuring a rapid and long peace. I hope it was so, but I see no reason for supposing it: and in truth, I am certain, almost, that the Sonnet refers to something else, though I have not the faintest idea what.

Lord Alfred Douglas is extremely witty and shrewd on Butler's "Paoli complex," which caused him to read his own autobiography into the Sonnets. Lord Alfred certainly pursues Butler very amusingly. He will not believe that Mr. W. H. was the wretch Butler describes or that he treated Shakespeare in the way Butler suggests. Though they certainly quarrelled from time to time, he sees no reason for assuming that they did not continue friends after the last Sonnet had been written. The whole Sonnet

Were't aught to me I bore the canopy

is obscure, and it is not certain that the phrase "Suborned informer" refers to Mr. W. H. at all, and even so why should they not have made it up again, as they had done before? All these speculations are here fresh and arresting; and though by the nature of things Lord Alfred cannot prove his point, he certainly gives one to think.

Lord Alfred Douglas attacks Butler for introducing his own Paoli complex into the story, and Frank Harris his mania about women. It is doubtful whether he has entirely succeeded in keeping his own autobiography out of the matter. We can always find in Shakespeare what we want.

Lord Alfred, for instance, is very insistent that Shakespeare's relations with Mr. W. H. were "innocent." I agree with him, but Lord Alfred obviously wants to believe it because he wants to believe that Shakespeare was, if not a Catholic, at any rate the next best thing. "He was almost certainly brought up a Catholic," he writes, "and though he undoubtedly succumbed to the pressure of the times in which he lived and outwardly abandoned his religion, he never lost the Catholic view about purity and impurity." On the contrary, there is a good deal of evidence to show that Shakespeare's father got into trouble in Stratford for his pronounced Protestant views, and I confess I fail to see any very strong Christian metaphysic running through Shakespeare's writings. Lord Alfred quotes the last two lines of Sonnet 141 Q:

Only my plague thus far I count my gain
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

This is certainly a very Christian sentiment, and it is very clever of Lord Alfred to have spotted it. But I do not see that it is necessarily Catholic or that Shakespeare need be "anticipating his Purgatory." The sentiment might well be Calvinistic rather than Catholic; and when he goes on to say that the famous Sonnet

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame

"epitomises his life-long attitude towards any kind of sexual intercourse outside marriage," he really seems to me to become fantastic. Marriage is never mentioned and need have nothing to do with it.

In many of Shakespeare's plays, particularly in "the great period," we see that Shakespeare was extremely "jumpy" about sex, and this Sonnet joins on to a psychology, which appears once more in *Lear, Measure for Measure, Timon, The Winter's Tale* and elsewhere. I have often been tempted to take this quite "independent" Sonnet out of the series altogether and attribute it to a later period, a step which could, I think, be justified on purely literary grounds. But the arguments against this are equally strong. In any case, I fail to see what a Christian institution like marriage has got to do with it.

All through, in fact, Lord Alfred wishes to turn Shakespeare into a "Catholic Puritan," and I do not think he has succeeded in doing so. "Platonism" was, I imagine, fashionable in the time of Shakespeare, and the Sonnets seem to me specimens of Platonist literature. The tone is certainly very different from that of the homosexual passages in *Hero and Leander*. Let us grant this. But nevertheless such complete absorption in another person of the same sex, whether "Platonic" or not, seems to me psychologically homosexual. And to many people, Lord Alfred's evident desire to "clear" Shakespeare, will seem more intense than the occasion demands. Nor will all his arguments appear equally convincing.

Lord Alfred correctly argues that when Shakespeare wrote the "Master-mistress of my passion" Sonnet his feelings were Platonic. But they need not have been so three years later. Shakespeare dropped the marriage business. (Is it not curious to urge a young actor of seventeen, who could presumably with difficulty keep himself, to marry and have a large family, which Shakespeare would very likely have to support?) He may well have dropped the "master-mistress" business as well. One can adopt Lord Alfred's conclusions without being convinced by all his arguments. Still it is difficult to review Lord Alfred's book without writing at almost equal length: and this is a measure of the freshness with which he treats the subject.

FRANCIS BIRRELL

## ENGLISH AGRICULTURE

**The Farm and the Nation.** By SIR E. JOHN RUSSELL. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

**Agricultural Co-operation in Scotland and Wales.** THE HORACE PLUNKETT FOUNDATION. *Routledge.* 7s. 6d.

Agriculture has long been the Cinderella of our industries, but there does now seem to be a chance that it will gain the most from the present confusion of tariffs, subsidies, quotas, marketing reform and restrictions of output by which we are trying to escape from our economic troubles. It has been fortunate in having two Ministers, Dr. Addison and Major Elliot, with a real knowledge of their subject, and in spite of the indifference and obstruction of their colleagues they have managed to evolve some kind of an agricultural policy which includes reorganisation at home and abroad, and sensible appreciation of world conditions. If a healthy industry is ultimately built up out of the ruins of nineteenth-century farming the nation will owe a great debt of gratitude to those who have been working for the last thirty years to persuade their countrymen to take an intelligent interest in the subject. Chief amongst them have been the late Sir Horace Plunkett and Sir John Russell.

The Horace Plunkett Foundation has now completed its survey of the British Isles. The variety and complexity of our farming is reflected in the small scale and somewhat experimental nature of our co-operative enterprises. National characteristics seem to have had their effect. "At the present time the English agricultural co-operative movement is strong but leaderless. The Irish movement, with great achievements behind it, has admittedly reached an hour of slack water. The Scottish movement, with past achievements statistically less impressive, is shaping a definite course with vigour and intention." The Agricultural Marketing Act and the new agricultural policy may cut across some of the existing co-operative organisations, but as Sir John Gilmour says in a foreword, "there is ample scope for the planned development, side by side, of voluntary co-operation and of statutory schemes under the Agricultural Marketing Act."

Sir John Russell reminds us that it is less than forty years ago that Sir William Crookes was prophesying the failure of the world's food supplies. The present uncertainty is as to who will be allowed to produce them. It is of little use to discuss details of policy until the community has decided the proportion of its supplies to be allotted to the home farmer, the producer in the Dominions, and the foreigner. Sir John points out three ways in which British agriculture could be treated. It may be "organised for the production from our soil of as much food as is practicable"; or "organised for the provision of work for men displaced by modern methods and by machinery"; or it may be "left to struggle as best it can against unrestricted imports of food from overseas." These three policies are distinct and in the main incompatible, and most of the muddled thinking which has devastated English agriculture from the last century has come from advocating incompatible policies. England is not likely to return to unrestricted imports, but there is still utter confusion about the proportion of the population which should be encouraged to produce food, and the type of product—meat, wheat or milk—which it would be best to develop. A careful survey like *The Farm and the Nation* shows the need of retaining some diversity, but suggests that in many cases our farmers are not making the best use of their soil, climate, and markets. The uncertainty about the future is the chief cause for their failure to adapt their methods to new conditions

# HIGHLAND SONGS

**Highland Songs of the Forty-Five.** Edited and Translated with Glossary and Notes by JOHN LORNE CAMPBELL. *John Grant, Edinburgh.* 16*s.*

When the illustrious author of *Ossian* visited Uist in 1760 during a three-months' tour through the Highlands and Islands in search of Gaelic poems he met Iain MacCodrum, the hereditary bard of the Island. "Do you know anything of the Fianna?" said MacPherson, enquiring, as was his wont, concerning the ancient champions of legend. But unfortunately, owing to his imperfect Gaelic, his words really signified, "Do the Fianna owe you anything?" "No, and if they did it would be useless to ask for it now," rapped out the bard.

A mist of vagueness and verbal misunderstanding has for a couple of centuries hidden the Celtic fringe. The mistiness and melancholy of MacPherson's prose-poems captured the jaded tastes of the eighteenth century and heralded the new romanticism. Goethe, Napoleon, all Europe seized on that mood. A similar approach to the Gaelic fringe at the end of the last century produced similar results in the Celtic Twilight School. Anglo-Irish writers followed hearsay into Connaught; William Sharp hurried from Glasgow on a brief tour of the Hebrides and returned spell-bound under the name of Fiona MacLeod. If these poets and enthusiasts had a knowledge of the Gaelic language, or if sufficient of the native literature had been translated into English, a modern poetry of misty loveliness and nuance might never have existed.

Dispel the mists and there remains a concrete, strictly formal Gaelic poetry. Here, within living memory, is an oral literature, a poetry never divorced from music. In an age when the written word is our tyrant one can still learn something from the survival of ancient method. Oral tradition, for instance, perfected the art of story-telling and such a writer as George Moore learned from the western folk-art in which a tale still passed between mouth and ear.

Men fought and died for the Jacobite cause, but it has long since faded into a mild literary romanticism. Mr. John Lorne Campbell's collection of the Highland Gaelic poems of the 'forty-five has both historical and literary value. Many of these poems, which express the last secret aspirations of the Highlands, have been printed and translated for the first time after a lapse of almost two centuries. The Stuart cause kindled racial imagination and, like the fiery cross of old, song sped through the Highlands.

The poets were of every class: John Roy Stewart was a soldier, Duncan Ban MacIntyre, one of the greatest of the later Gaelic poets, was a game-keeper, Rob Donn Mackay was but a herdsman. It is important to realise, however, that all these poets were composing in an elaborate artistic form handed down for centuries—a form which their native audience of crofters and chiefs expected and appreciated. Such an atmosphere was only rendered possible by an oral art. Mr. Lorne Campbell has reproduced the accentual metres of the original poems, but he has avoided the impossible task of imitating the internal patterns of assonance. Assonance, being less reverberant than rhyme at the end of a line, needs a support and so a similar sound is placed in the middle of the next line: from this simple acoustic need an intricate formal pattern of internal sounds was developed in ancient times.

Much of the effect of these poems is lost, for like the later poetry of Swinburne their attraction often consists of mere vowel music. The native oral poetry, both in Scotland and Ireland, became decadent through over-ornamentation of adjectives. Although it would be impossible to reproduce in English the wash and surging of syllables in the original, so effective when recited loudly, the following shows bardic ornamentation at its best or worst:

> Make haste with lively speed
> O'er th' dark-blue, surging waters
> Rough-ridged curling, restless,
> Deep-valleyed, white-topped, close-run,
> Of the rough, clear-backed sea-waves;
> The deep, dark, gloomy sea-glens
> On their curving, stormy way.

But the quality of the poems may be judged by these lines from "A Song composed in the Year 1746," of MacDonald. He was more literate than his fellows and had the honour of having a book burned by the public hangman.

> O chroniclers of the Clans!
> Arise, write now the effectual tale,
> O chroniclers of to-day
> Take up your ink and pens,
> This is the wonderful year
> When the sun with soft and fertile warmth
> His lovely beams shall shed on us;
> Dew shall cover the grass,
> Milk and honey shall be unasked,
> Silver and gold.

Political and war poetry is not always of high quality and many of these poems express the racial hatred caused by the horrid atrocities after Culloden: Hanover and Whitehall are denounced in furious abuse:

> O, that swine King George
> Son of the sow from Germany,
> The care and kin he shows
> Us, is a raven's for his bone.

Apart from their importance to historians the poems show how the last poets of the Highlands adapted the formal imagery of the past to the cause of Prince Charles. They call on fair seas and pure skies to attend his sail. They see the streets lit with bonfires:

> While the markets resound with "Great Charles, our own Prince!"
> . . . . each window shines with the light that is streaming
> From high burning-candles fair maidens are tending.

They celebrate the clansmen with their cockades and blue bonnets, their garters of scarlet, their Spanish swords and pistols.

But in its last flare the native poetry produced one crop of indignant, richly idiomatic poems: these are the little-known Breeches Songs. The prescription of Highland dress stirred the racial imagination. Never were trousers so besung and it would not have consoled these poets had they known that trews were the invention of the ancient Celts. John MacCodrum, in his "Song against the Lowland Garb," exclaims:

> I am sick at heart, I am tired and full of sorrow,
> Bonds are on my limbs, I cannot move a footstep,
> Cursed be the King, who took the plaids away,
> May he damned be since our hose he lengthened.

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And MacIntyre complains:

> There's buttons all around our knees
> And buckles closely fastening,
> And now the breeks are doubled close
> Round the backside of every man.

The Gaelic texts are printed conveniently opposite the poems, and in an appendix are given some of the original airs to which these long poems, with their secret symbolism, were sung around the winter fire and in remote corries. Mr. Campbell has taken elaborate pains in editing and preparing texts and must be congratulated on his book.

AUSTIN CLARKE

## ARCTIC BISMARCK

**The Quest for Polar Treasures.** By JAN WELZL. Translated by M. and R. WEATHERALL. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

*The Quest for Polar Treasures* is a continuation of *Thirty Years in the Golden North*. Jan Welzl is what the Americans call an old-timer, one of those fatalistic old adventurers, tough as pig-skin but as full of wonder as a boy, whose type used to be common in the early prospecting, covered-wagon kind of films, in which he often seemed to stand out as the only flesh-and-blood figure among a crowd of made-up studio artists parading against a background of fake Alaskan snow. There has been some suggestion that Welzl himself is a fake and that he never "after years and years of dreadful suffering and privation, from a simple locksmith, sailor and tramp, became a hunter of note and an established trader; proprietor of a splendid boat and chief judge of New Siberia." It is possible; and perhaps Welzl, like Defoe, is really hoodwinking us, and has simply read it all up in text-books or seen it all on some forgotten film, and has never been farther North than Nova Scotia: oh, yes! as he himself would say, it is possible. But if it is a fake then there isn't an author who won't envy Welzl the fecundity of his imagination, his magnificent powers of description, his shrewd feeling for both animals and his fellow-men; for, fake or no fake, take it which way you like, *The Quest for Polar Treasures* is a remarkable book, and I for one am ready to accept every word of it: not as hard, bald gospel truth, for no man of Welzl's age can be expected to tell the truth about the size of a sea-elephant or a catch of salmon, or anything else that he saw thirty or forty years ago. Welzl is now an old man, and all old men's tales are the same—little snowballs of memory which roll over and over in their minds gathering the snow of more memories, always getting larger, the little tales rolling into each other and then into the larger tales, until, if the man is remarkable enough, like Welzl, the tale becomes an epic. This is exactly what Welzl's book is: a series of incidents, tales and adventures all rolled together into one great narrative of life in the frozen North: a tale peopled by gold-maniacs, hunters, explorers, Eskimos, trappers, with Welzl himself as the unconscious hero. It is often a disjointed tale; often it seems to be chronologically upside down. Often Welzl forgets and breaks off to remember, and confesses it difficult. Often it reads like a Wild West blood-and-thunder; but it is all fresh and vivid and fascinating, its wildest improbabilities tempered by the shrewdness and scepticism of Welzl's old mind, so that sometimes its most extraordinary passages are its most credible, as in the description of the mad rush to dig gold from the bed of the sea:

> As soon as the hour of the regular ebb tide approached the sea began to recede and recede and left its bed exposed. Just then—but I had never seen before anything like what happened at that moment. Everybody dashed away, people like flies rushed for the sea-bottom; and when I saw them I ran to see their madness at close quarters. It was tremendous fun, if only one looked on. They immediately threw themselves on the spots which they fancied most, and they worked as if they had lost their senses. Here two worked together; one poured water into the little machine, the other threw in the sand; some worked with mercury; many stood in the water and had boats with them. A feeling of horror fell on me as I watched this human struggle, and dreadful scramble. . . . I stood by one man, and for a while I watched him in amazement. He had such amazing luck; on his shovel he took up perhaps a thousand dollars at a time. It was pure gold, as fine as oatmeal gruel. "God bless you, man, you are lucky!" said I, trying to talk with him. But he kept on shovelling as if unconscious of anything else.

Primarily a hunter and trader, Welzl had no use for gold; he had seen the fever too often and knew its tragic consequences too well. Yet his whole life in the North was spent in pursuit of riches—"It was a wild chase after money, a quest for Polar treasures." And all in order to buy a boat, "to be able to paint her blue, yellow, red or piebald, anything I fancied, without asking anyone." The boat's name was *Laura* and Welzl's nickname was Arctic Bismarck, and there is really a kind of tragic love-story in Welzl's longing for that boat, his struggles for it, his privations, the final irony of his possession of it. He has now returned to the North, "where I shall not die of hunger while my old hands can get me a living . . . telling the Eskimos about the things which I have seen while with you in Europe. And just as you would not believe me when I told you about even the most ordinary things in the North, they will shake their heads, and quietly whisper, 'Arctic Bismarck is pulling our legs.'" And like us, no doubt, they will be absolutely fascinated, too.

H. E. BATES

## ETERNAL VERITIES

**All Men Are Enemies.** By RICHARD ALDINGTON. *Chatto and Windus.* 8s. 6d.

The public does not feel easy about a new writer of great talents until it has succeeded in explaining him in terms of what already exists—in pigeon-holing him, in fact. A particularly inexorable pigeon-hole or category is waiting to engulf Richard Aldington. He is to be known, it seems, as a slashing-attack man. Specifically as an exponent of the horrors of war and its consequences and a derider of County, highbrows, the world of business and golf, etc.—a particularly misleading summary, since it places him with our modern floggers of dead horses, with our plucky neo-Shavians who crusade against the prejudices and convictions held only by their least enlightened aunts, and with their disciples our gutty school of journalists. The gulf between *All Men Are Enemies* and this sort of world is particularly obvious.

The novel is a kind of prologue and epilogue to *Death of a Hero*, with Winterbourne now changed to Tony Clarendon. The pre-war Tony is described in his boyhood, beautifully indolent and able to employ his senses as a poet should, in haphazard perception and enjoyment. Then the novel jumps straight to 1919, and Tony, after the war, is described with his elaborate and subtle sensibilities poisoned by the undigested horrors of his experience, as fully a victim of the guns as ever Winterbourne was, except that he still exists as a "half-demented crock," his clear apprehensions turned to nervous reactions. A familiar Aldington situation, readers will say. But as if he were conscious of an obligation to add a positive to his many negatives—the one factor which conscious effort cannot produce—the author brings the hero finally to life again, and he finds redemption, after escaping from the business world and a post-war wife, in reunion with his first love, an Austrian girl from whom he had been separated by the war.

It is possible to respect and to admire the attempt, and yet say that there is no conviction about it as a new expression of fulfilment. Perhaps in some way the war is Aldington's fulfilment, and though the actual war years are omitted from the book, it is chiefly in relation to them that the book lives. In the beginning, the calm before the storm is the controlling element in the sensitive description of the boy's first love thoughts, and first sensuous enjoyment of poetry and of nature: the 1919 chapter describing Tony ill with "delayed shock," as the doctors coolly put it, and then the frenzied search in Vienna for the girl, the desire to cool his still festering nerves in contact with this woman he had known so happily before—these are the parts of the book which have the authenticity, the sense of uncontainable experience, the dignity even, of *Death of a Hero*.

Conversely there are pages which are correspondingly dead, where Tony is not seen in relation to the war, or, indeed, to any experience, but where he triumphantly maintains opinions. Here the slashing attacks come in, and there are a series of really incredibly flat characters whose unhappy function it is to engage in arguments with the hero and come off worst: Henry Clarendon, the father, hard and scientific—Crang, who starts by being hard and Bolshevist, and ends by being hard and successful; Julian, Waterton—one forgets which is which. Is it carelessness which makes the author set these impossibilities beside the much-alive reality of Tony? Is it indifference to the undoubtedly highbrow art of character drawing, or impatience with the minute dissection of human traits in which so many modern novelists succeed? This is when the anger becomes nervous exasperation, and the crude satire which is the result does not seem to be invalidated, as somehow it is in the case of D. H. Lawrence, by the force of his poetic apprehension of the object attacked.

Half-way through the novel there is a certain incident, a

parenthesis only, but important. It is New Year's Night, and the hero's wife and her unpleasant friends are expressing their hateful characters round a punchbowl by way of celebration. Tony silently breaks away and steps out on to the lawn alone to feel the texture of the winter turf, touch the air, look at the stars, and become conscious, in his temporary solitude, of what he carelessly but not uncomprehendingly calls the " eternal verities." He has to readjust his thoughts, to scale them down, as it were, before he can go back to his friends and talk to them. Yet the necessity is a self-imposed one. It arises because, though there is some divinity in Aldington's world, it is never to be found in the people of his world. We are never able to feel that men and women, besides night, stars, and grand scenes of death and battle, are also symbols of the " eternal verities."

Even this summary is a judgment by defects. There are certain strong and major qualities which have nothing to do with attacks. Sincerity; the impression of autobiography (but concerned with a life too keenly experienced for egotism); the complete absence of any tendency to belittle his characters by over-humanisation, in the contemporary manner. The long novel wants an index so that the minor good bits, as well, can be tabulated. Page 358 *et seq.* for Tony's visit, after eighteen years, to the once god-like Evelyn, now turned into a horrifying Anglo-Indian lady. The descriptions of Tony's wife, another horror, the kind of woman who, when she sees the abstracted gaze of her husband turned even approximately in her direction, will ask—God knows why—for no reason, perhaps, or because she thinks she is not being loved enough: " Why are you looking at me like that? " Mr. Aldington can write of falling in love, but I think he describes the bleaknesses of falling out of love even better, a subject decidedly more neglected in literature.

Negatives again, but it must be remembered that to talk deprecatingly of the bitterness is absurd. Richard Aldington's importance is that he has the power to speak for his generation, that he sings " himself " in " These States "; it is beside the point that in contrast with Whitman the nation and personality he expresses is in decay, and permanently wounded by the sense of aspirations blunted or lost in a half-unrighteous war.

STEPHEN POTTER

THE WORLD HIS PILLOW

JAMES BARKE

"A fine novel, far ahead of the common run."
*Saturday Review*

"A notable addition to Scots fiction." *Dr. J. M. Bulloch*

"A first novel of more than usual promise."
*Daily Telegraph*

COLLINS

## THREE FRENCH DRAMATISTS

**Three French Dramatists: Racine, Marivaux, Musset.** By ARTHUR TILLEY. *Cambridge University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

In a series of sound and scholarly books, the production of which has extended over nearly half a century, Mr. Arthur Tilley has surveyed practically the whole field of French literature. Students of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance are more particularly in his debt, for it is there that his sane erudition has been most corrective of clever surmises; but his studies of later developments, whether classical or romantic, are equally sympathetic and suggestive.

His most recent book may perhaps be regarded as the fine flower of a life-long devotion. It is at any rate remarkably satisfactory to read. Though it consists of three separate studies, each of which is complete and sufficient in itself, it has an essential unity. And this is the more potently manifest in that it is not stressed. Mr. Tilley notes the stream of tendency which flowed from Racine to Marivaux, from Marivaux to Musset, but he is not concerned to make a point of it. The homogeneity of his triptych springs from deeper roots. His three subjects, one of them a very great writer, the others achieving occasional greatness, had this in common: they were all realists content, for the most part, to work within the limits of a non-realistic convention. Racine accepted the classic unities and the *dramatis personæ* of the heroic drama brought to marmoreal perfection by Corneille. Marivaux wrote for the Italian comedians and respected the traditional idiosyncrasies of their types. Musset, though he quarelled with the rhetoric of romanticism, discarded neither its picturesque costumes nor the idealised southlands of its predilection. But what most interested each of them were the subtle realities, the finer shades, of human character.

And that, evidently, is what has given Mr. Tilley his special interest in them. He shows a just appreciation of the peculiar conditions of drama, of what differentiates a play from any other kind of imaginative literature. But it is to the psychology of the characters of his authors that he gives the greater part of his attention. In this he displays a notable delicacy of perception, a nicely balanced judgment and a genuine humanism.

All his three chapters are good, but perhaps the best, at any rate the most necessary, is that on Marivaux. For Marivaux, because he made use of the masks of the *commedia dell'arte*, has too often been superficially labelled the Watteau of the theatre. Mr. Tilley, making a careful analysis of his principal plays, as he does of those of Racine and Musset, is able to show that, in the age of Voltaire and Crébillon, he brought to the theatre something entirely new, a gift for the display of the refinements and hesitations of passion, by means of dialogue which is always natural—for the old indictment of *marivaudage* is cited only to be dismissed—and nearly always dramatically effective, such as was hardly to be paralleled until Tchehov wrote. As Emile Faguet has said, Marivaux is " le peintre des sentiments déliés, raffinés, tenus et charmants. . . . Il aime précisément les combats délicats et fugitifs de l'amour et de l'amour propre; il aime les aubes de l'amour et la tendresse encore inconsciente qui commence à se rendre compte de sa naissance et il se plait à lire dans les cœurs à cette heure indécise, ' lorsque n'étant plus nuit; il n'est pas encore jour.' " Mr. Tilley, with chapter and verse to support him, says much the same thing, and says it very well.

## SHORTER NOTICES

**Dent's Double Volumes.** Volumes 1 to 8. *Dent.* 5*s. each.*

**Collins' Pocket Classics.** Six new volumes. *Collins.* 2*s. each.*

**Phoenix Book Company Catalogue.** *Phoenix Book Company,* 3 and 4, King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

The disadvantage of publishing classics in a small cheap edition is that so many of them divide into two or more volumes. The smaller volumes are convenient to carry about and read, but easily mislaid; or one packs the first volume of *War and Peace* and the second of *Morte D'Arthur*, and discovers the fact in mid-Channel. The publishers of the Everyman Library, faced with an accumulation in their list of double volumes, have had the simple and ingenious idea of combining these double volumes into one. The new volumes are exactly twice the size of the old, still handy enough, and are the same in type and format except that the new cover has a matt surface. The first eight volumes are: *Pepys, The Decameron, Tom Jones, Marx's Capital, Boswell's Johnson, The Wealth of Nations, Anna Karenina* and *The Count of Monte Cristo.*

The new volumes in Collins' Pocket Classics include, one is glad to see, George Douglas's *The House with the Green Shutters.* This fine

novel deserves a much wider public than it has hitherto had; the attention of Dr. A. J. Cronin's astonished admirers, in particular, is drawn to it. The illustrations of this popular edition are rather shocking, but otherwise the book is good to handle and read. The other new volumes in the series are: *Memoirs of a Midget*, by Walter de la Mare; *The Fencing Master*, by Dumas; *My Lady of the Chimney Corner*, by Alexander Irvine; *Mr. Britling*, by H. G. Wells; and the New Testament.

The complete catalogue of the Phoenix Book Company gives a full list of the books which can now be purchased from the Company on the instalment plan. This is an enterprise which booksellers will no doubt oppose, as they have opposed all such competitive schemes (the Book Society, for example); but it is astonishing that this method of buying books should not have become far more popular than it actually is. The list of books given in the catalogue is extremely attractive; it includes such excellent series as the Everyman Library, the Travellers' Library, Phoenix Library, Constable's Miscellany, etc., complete editions of Lawrence, Shaw, Scott, Maupassant, Dickens, Jane Austen and many others; miscellaneous works such as the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the Cambridge History of English Literature (new cheap edition), and the Oxford History of Music. Sets, or single volumes (a minimum of twenty), cost the ordinary price, plus an addition of ninepence for each ten shillings to cover the instalment charges. Payment is spread over a period up to eighteen months. The initial payment works out at about one-twentieth of the total price. The convenience of this method of buying, which has apparently been realised in every trade except bookselling, is obvious.

**Limey. An Englishman Joins the Gangs.** By JAMES SPENSER. *Longmans.* 10s. 6d.

Since a great many of us have a secret desire to prey on our fellow-creatures, this account of how a young graduate of Borstal and Dartmoor "made good" as a gunman working under a small gang leader in New York, and later in Los Angeles, will be thoroughly popular. The description of hi-jacking, beating up troublesome patrons in speaks, and of gang warfare, sounds authentic and may very well be the literal truth. The descriptions of how the author, with other paid protectors of a gambling joint in Hollywood, would follow a lucky winner at the tables home and rob and half-murder him in a spirit of private enterprise, after the house had closed for the night, give a good idea of his "toughness." Incidentally, the description of cowed terror of ordinary Americans in the presence of murder gives the chief reason why gunmen flourish. So long as part of an English crowd runs *at* an armed man, instead of *away* from him, we shall be safe from these brutes.

**The Stock Exchange Official Intelligence.** Edited by the Secretary of the Share and Loan Department of the Stock Exchange. *Spottiswoode and Ballantyne.* 60s.

If the financial history of the twelve months since this annual last appeared proves anything it is that prudent investors cannot have too much information about securities and investments which they are considering. They will find here in concise form particulars not only of all the leading shares dealt with on the exchanges, but of British, Colonial and Foreign securities of Governments and Municipalities, besides much else. The different classes of securities and companies are grouped together and an excellent index is furnished. Special notes this year deal, among other things, with War Debts and Reparations, Estate Duty and U.S. Federal Income Tax, and there is a special chapter on the finances of India. The printing and binding of the volume's 2,000-odd pages are, as usual, admirable.

**Local Government in Many Lands.** By G. MONTAGU HARRIS. Second Edition. *King.* 15s.

This book first appeared in 1926, and was justly acclaimed as a very valuable contribution to the study of comparative local government. Mr. Harris has now enhanced its value by a careful revision and the addition of several new chapters. Two of these describe the local government systems in Turkey and in the U.S.S.R. For those countries where there have been any considerable changes during the last seven years—*e.g.*, Italy, Rumania, Hungary, Poland and Great Britain—the facts and figures are brought up to date. The result is a compendium of information covering a vast field and of extraordinary accuracy.

**Strangers and Sojourners at Port Royal.** By RUTH CLARK. *Cambridge University Press.* 18s.

Jansenism and its widespread influences in any country during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is too complex a subject for one book. Thus Miss Clark has left to others more theologically minded a discussion of its influence on English thought, finding sufficient occupation in tracking down all the people of British origin who are known to have Jansenist associations. There are a surprising number of them. Drawn from all sorts and conditions, they provide Miss Clark with a rich variety of topics. Politically Jansenism had no significance here except in connection with the exiled Stuarts. Apart from its effects on Aubigny's career, and the abandonment of the suggested English bishopric of Dunkirk, Port Royal was responsible for the failure of a mission sent by Charles II to Rome to raise funds, his emissaries being tainted with Jansenism. As Miss Clark admits, her biographical treatment was bound to result in an episodic book; but her survey is made largely on unexplored territory, and is conducted with such admirable scholarship that her book cannot fail to interest both specialists and readers of memoirs alike.

**The Common Sense of Political Economy and Selected Papers and Reviews on Economic Theory.** By PHILIP H. WICKSTEED. Edited, with an Introduction, by PROFESSOR LIONEL ROBBINS. 2 Vols. *Routledge.* 8s. 6d. and 12s. 6d.

The late Philip Wicksteed is remembered as one of the most successful of all extension lecturers, and until recently his work in economics, important as it was, had been forgotten except by a few. *The Common Sense of Political Economy* has been long out of print and copies of it have been difficult to come by; the present reprint is therefore very welcome, for Wicksteed wrote well, and certainly there has been no clearer presentation than his of the point of view in economic theory for which he stood. Building on the foundations laid by Stanley Jevons and the Austrian school, Wicksteed built up a comprehensive economic theory on the basis of the doctrine of marginal utility. Demand, he held, was the factor of overriding importance through the whole pricing system. The ultimate valuations placed on commodities by consumers were the key to all prices, including the prices of capital and immediate goods, of labour, land and money, as well as the prices of final commodities. Whether this view is accepted or not, it is certainly one which every student of economic theory has to understand, and he will find it far easier to get a clear view of it from Wicksteed than from any other of its exponents. Professor Robbins, in his introduction, evidently does accept the theory, and he pays high tribute to Wicksteed for his formulation of it. In addition to *The Common Sense*, this reprint includes a complete list of Wicksteed's economic writings and a selection of his economic articles. Among these is his attempt to refute the Marxian theory of value, together with Bernard Shaw's answer, printed originally in *To-day* in 1884. Wicksteed's attack on Marx was written before the later volumes of *Das Kapital* appeared, and is based to a considerable extent on a misunderstanding of Marxian doctrine; but it seems doubtful, in the light of Bernard Shaw's reply, whether he was any nearer understanding what Marx really meant. In fact, much as Wicksteed's refutation of Marx is praised by Professor Robbins, there appears to be very little in it. The main value of this reprint lies in making *The Common Sense* again accessible for the use of students, and in reprinting Wicksteed's useful paper on *Elementary Mathematical Economics*.

# About Motoring

## MORE SAFETY PROPOSALS

PUBLIC opinion is rightly stirred to its depths by the enormous toll of life and limb imposed by modern road traffic; and scarcely a week passes without some new suggestion being launched for reducing these appalling figures. We should be brutes if we accepted the casualty list complacently. We shall be fools if we jump at ill-considered remedies. We shall be improvident if we fail to realise that the trouble is largely due to crowding, and that any substantial return to prosperity will swell the volume of traffic by thousands of cars and many thousands of motor cycles; motor cycle traffic in particular has been very substantially reduced by the slump, since these machines sell chiefly to prosperous artisans and to the sons of the well-to-do; and as both types of customer have been practically exterminated by the slump, four of our greatest motor cycle firms have put up their shutters in the last year.

Four constructive proposals have been promulgated in the last few years. The only official scheme was embodied in the Road Traffic Act, and took the form of substantial punishments for road offences. This scheme has failed, because the authorities consider that it is unworkable in practice. Since the individuals who operate our penal and judicial systems are motorists almost to a man, it may be that they are unduly sympathetic to the driver who through some small error of judgment kills or maims another road user. But we can hardly avoid setting a thief to catch a thief in this field, and the history of Prohibition in the States is full of salutary warnings against laws which fail to enlist the support of public opinion. The second constructive proposal is the legal enforcement of driving lessons. This is idiotic, because no tyro takes the road without seeking prolonged instruction at expert hands, and the situation would be quite unchanged. It is conceivable that a standard series of lessons by official instructors might be imposed, and that the whole cost could be placed on the pupils. But few good judges imagine that this addition to our innumerable bureaucracies would effect large reductions in the tale of crashes. The third constructive proposal is the enforcement of driving tests. I was talking last week to a man who is an official examiner in the driving tests for the International driving licence, which must be held by any Briton who wishes to drive a car on the Continent, tests which are imposed on British tourists by the laws of certain continental nations. In many years' work he has rejected precisely one applicant, who in the course of his

# THE WISDOM OF THE YOUNG

"What'll you smoke?"

"Pipe, if it's all the same to you, uncle."

"Bless my heart, you couldn't do better. What tobacco do you young fellers smoke nowadays?"

"Three Nuns, mostly."

"Good lad! I've never been without it since I cut my wisdom teeth."

## THREE NUNS

*The tobacco of curious cut, 1/2½ an ounce*

STEPHEN MITCHELL & SON, *Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.*, 36 ST. ANDREW SQUARE, GLASGOW

test charged a pillar-box, and this applicant passed with flying colours at a second essay. He was, in actual fact, an experienced driver with an excellent record devoid of accidents and prosecutions, but suffered from nerves in an official test, and momentarily lost his head. There is no prospect that any imaginable driving test would penalise the men who are guilty of committing frequent blunders or taking undue risks.

A few weeks ago a contemporary published an elaborate scheme of organised road reports on drivers. All motorists were to be invited to submit to a central office the number of any vehicle observed in an act of misconduct, such as "cutting in," cornering too finely or too fast, failure to use the horn, and so forth. Prepaid addressed forms were to be obtainable free at any post office. These reports were to be filed under the car number, and used in two distinct ways. Whenever a motorist came into the courts his file was to be produced and considered. When the number of adverse reports on an individual reached a certain total, action was to be taken by the Government against him.

The cost of this proposal is the least of its demerits. Let us imagine that Jones is a man of fifty, with a wife and three adult children, all of whom drive. In addition, his car is frequently driven by garage hands. In addition, he happens to be one of those semi-professional motorists who often borrow a trade car for a week-end, and occasionally fetch new cars from factories to oblige a small provincial dealer. Reports against the Jones private car and the assorted vehicles which he occasionally handles accumulate for six years. In the seventh year Jones falls foul of the law. These accumulated reports are adduced in evidence. Poor Jones cannot identify any of the older occasions, or prove who was driving. Any sane judge will be compelled to wave the dossier out of court. The system would construct an enormous and expensive bureaucracy, and would be entirely useless except for penalising some tipsy new-rich, guilty of a dozen heinous road crimes in his first six months with his new projectile. And he would infallibly get laid by the heels in any case.

I am still by no means convinced that the real solution pivots on the motorist at all. In approximately 500,000 miles I have been concerned in four accidents, and have witnessed two more. Of my four accidents three were concerned with cyclists. Twice girl cyclists have charged my parked car when it was stationary, facing up a hill. Once I brushed over a cyclist at ten miles an hour, when his brakes failed, and he swerved out at right angles to dodge a bus which had stopped dead in front of him without signalling. Once a small boy charged out of an alley in front of me, and I had to charge the tail of a cart at low speed to avoid him. No safety system can repress small urchins, and my other three accidents were all produced by the stupidity of cyclists. One of the two accidents which I have witnessed (both were serious) happened many years ago, and took the form of a solitary car skidding wildly on an empty road 200 yards ahead of me; it overturned, killed the driver, and seriously injured the other three occupants. This smash was due to an obsolete car sliding violently on an obsolete type of road, and would not occur to any modern vehicle on any modern road. The other smash resulted in a death. A cyclist errand-boy, lost in day-dreams, suddenly elected to turn right round in a road which was empty except for a car travelling at perhaps 40 miles an hour. The boy was killed, and the car driver was rightly acquitted. Thus, as far as my prolonged experience teaches anything, it merely suggests that cyclists require some form of education. My experiences are probably not typical; but their special form serves to indicate the manifold complications of a very difficult problem.

R. E. DAVIDSON

ARISTOPHANES
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GILBERT MURRAY
7/6 net

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CHARLES WILLIAMS
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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Playtime

## CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

### PROBLEM 16.—MEDDLING PRYOR

Miss Rosie Parker, the gossip writer, spends a week-end at Meddling Pryor. Her insatiable curiosity leads her, during that period, to collect the following facts:

(1) Nine villagers (and only nine) are members of the Parish Council. They are Messrs. Baker, Butcher, Carter, Cooper, Driver, Painter, Smith, Tinker, and Wainwright.

(2) These villagers are a baker, a butcher, a carter, a cooper, a driver, a painter, a smith, a tinker and a wainwright. None of them bears the name of his own vocation.

(3) The tinker is the painter's father-in-law.

(4) Mr. Tinker is engaged to the smith's only daughter, who has already rejected Mr. Tinker's rivals, the driver and the baker.

(5) Mr. Cooper's daughter partners her fiancé at tennis.

(6) Mr. Wainwright shares an allotment with his son-in-law.

(7) Mr. Driver, who is a bachelor, was born when Mr. Asquith was Premier.

(8) Mr. Tinker won the D.C.M. at Gallipoli.

(9) The butcher and the cooper are married to each other's sisters.

(10) No Parish Councillor has more than one daughter. Two Councillors each have one.

(11) Mr. Driver is a year older than the wainwright.

(12) Mr. Butcher is the wainwright's godfather.

(13) The butcher is the namesake of the vocation of the namesake of the vocation of Mr. Cooper, and the cooper is the namesake of the vocation of the namesake of the vocation of Mr. Wainwright.

IDENTIFY EACH OF THE NINE COUNCILLORS

### PROBLEM 14.—THE ANARCHISTS

The Butcher warns two absent members, making six in all. He places One Eye at No. 3 and himself at No. 6.

One or two solvers have assumed that the Butcher was himself absent from the preliminary discussion. The wording of the problem, however, excludes this interpretation. I have given it careful consideration, but I cannot reconcile it with the text of the third paragraph.

### PROBLEM 13.—APHRODITE

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to: R. L. Michaelson, 116 Priory Road, West Hampstead, N.W.6.

There were 112 correct and twenty-one incorrect solutions.

### PRIZES FOR PROBLEM-SOLVERS

One set of Low's cartoons is awarded weekly to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition a record is kept of the names of senders of all correct solutions submitted. All solvers qualify for book prizes on a cumulative-point basis. For particulars see THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of December 24th.

Solutions to the current problem must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 10 Gt. Queen Street, London, W.C.2, and must reach this office not later than the next Tuesday but one after the date of publication.

CALIBAN

# Facts v. Sentiment

'N.S. & N.' readers prefer facts to sentiment. There are 62,000 blind in England; of these 2,300 are children under 16.

The blind welfare system in this country is a threefold partnership of State, local authority and voluntary agency. Between these three parties every blind person is cared for. Local associations administer many services to their blind, such as teaching the blind Braille reading in their own homes; but it will be readily understood that many services have to be conducted nationally, sometimes internationally, and that is where the National Institute for the Blind comes in.

The Institute has been the leading Braille publishing house in the world for many years. The Braille books, magazines and newspapers are largely produced by blind labour. Classics, text books, fiction, thrillers, general—a wide selection of literature is available.

The N.I.B. has many other fields of activity. It runs Homes and Schools for Children, Homes for Adults, a School of Massage, a College for Blind Girls, etc.; it also makes financial grants each year to local and other associations. Overseas, the Institute co-operates with blind welfare centres, and assists in the promotion of new activities.

This is but a sketchy outline of the work of the N.I.B., which is supported by voluntary gifts and legacies. Each year many subscriptions lapse. Will you replace one of them? However small your gift, it is urgently needed and will be wisely used. If you cannot promise an annual subscription, do please send what you can NOW. Why not make a practice of saving what you can each Lent and sending it to the N.I.B. every Easter?

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# THE WEEK IN THE CITY

LUCKY MR. NORMAN—6*d.* OFF INCOME TAX—GERMAN BONDS—BRITISH EQUITIES

How far is the great reputation of the Bank of England founded upon luck? When the Bank of England was handing over £19½ millions of gold to the Government for the American debt payment last December foreigners talked nervously about inflation in Great Britain, while the British taxpayer as nervously looked forward to deflation (as the fiduciary issue was not increased) and to still higher taxation. Since that date the flight of foreign money from gold currencies into sterling has enabled the Bank of England to acquire through the Exchange Equalisation Account nearly £60 millions of gold and to reduce the fiduciary issue by £15 millions without causing any change in its policy of cheap and plentiful money. Hats will go off to the Governor of the Bank of England, but Mr. Montagu Norman, being essentially a modest man, will probably disclaim all foresight or any idea of an intelligent policy. Now, if only Mr. Neville Chamberlain would take a chance as Mr. Montagu Norman has done, we could have 6*d.* off the income tax. The slump has played into the Treasury's hands by forcing down the rate of interest and allowing vast debt conversion schemes to be carried out. This year the saving in the national debt interest charge is approximately £38 millions gross, or, allowing for loss in income-tax receipts, £30 millions net. If, as every reasonable economist is now arguing, the Government were to borrow for the sinking funds, which last year took £17.2 millions, the Treasury would have £47 millions in hand to meet (*a*) 6*d.* off the income tax (£22 millions), and (*b*) a further falling off in income tax and surtax receipts and other revenue (£25 millions). The gilt-edged market professes to see no chance of a reduction in direct taxation this year. Even the brewery market seems disinclined to anticipate a reduction in the beer tax. But stranger things have been seen in these abnormal times than hope rising in the breast of a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

* * *

The slump in German Government bonds cannot just be attributed to the malicious or forced selling of embittered, exiled Jews. The market is genuinely nervous about the political and economic situation—first, because the Nazi Party sincerely believes that in the days of humiliation Germany was forced at the point of the Allied bayonet to pay extortionate rates of interest to foreign bankers; secondly, because the rapid decline in the export trade this year is making the transfer of interest on commercial debt a problem almost as acute as was the transfer of reparations. Politics, however, are not such a serious question for German bondholders as economics. The Nazi Government, on the authority of recent distinguished visitors, regards repudiation or unilateral suspension of loan contracts as unthinkable. It is not likely to interfere at this stage with its nominee at the Reichsbank, Dr. Schacht, in his handling of the foreign banker. Dr. Schacht has again stated (*vide* his speech at the Reichsbank meeting, April 7th) that Germany would stand by her foreign commercial obligations in order to preserve the confidence needed for her trade connections. And he has repeated his determination to maintain the stability of the mark and to reject all inflationary schemes for dealing with the unemployment problem. It was primarily to show that his predecessor at the Reichsbank, Dr. Luther, was wrong, not to flaunt Germany's transfer weakness, that Dr. Schacht decided to repay in gold the rediscount credit of $70 millions (originally $100 millions) granted in 1931 by the Bank of England, the Bank of France, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Bank for International Settlements. This credit had been arranged by Dr. Luther at a time when there were grave doubts about the stability of the mark. Dr. Schacht had described the operation as an expensive piece of camouflage, for the credit was not to be drawn upon (it was merely a decorative addition to the Reichsbank's gold reserve), and was costing 4 per cent. in interest.

* * *

We will agree with Dr. Schacht that his decision to repay the rediscount credit was consistent and justified on the ground of realism, especially as his Government is maintaining a strict exchange control. Nevertheless, it reduces the Reichsbank's ratio of gold to notes from 23.7 per cent. to about 10 per cent. Since the beginning of the year the gold and foreign exchange holdings of the Reichsbank have steadily declined and without foreign credits will be reduced to only Rm. 351 millions. The surplus of exports over imports has fallen in alarming fashion. Last year the monthly surplus of exports over imports was over Rm. 90 millions. In January this year it was Rm. 22.7 and in February Rm. 26.2 millions. The service of the external debt required last year over Rm. 80 millions a month. Obviously, Dr. Schacht must raise the question of Germany's ability to transfer interest on her external long-term debt sooner or later. At one time it was thought that he would wait for the World Economic Conference, but as no German Minister has been invited to attend the European jamboree at the White House, he will probably decide to take earlier action. We do not look for any arbitrary reduction of interest on the 7 per cent. Dawes Loan—this is only costing Germany a little over £2,300,000 per annum—but as the Lausanne Agreement left the security of both the Dawes and Young Loans somewhat in the air, Dr. Schacht may take the opportunity of negotiating a fresh agreement with the holders of these loans. Clearly, the bondholders would not object to a reduction in the rate of interest if they obtained added security.

| | Int. Dates. | Approx. Present Price. | Approx. Yield % Annual. | Incl. Redn. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| German 7% 1949 | 15 AO | 77½ | £ 9 6 6 | £10 3 6 |
| German 5½% 1965 | 1 JD | 63½ | £ 8 17 9 | £9 4 9 (a) |
| | | | £12 10 0 | £12 16 6 (b) |

(a) if exchange constant. (b) if collected 3.50 per £1.

* * *

British industrial ordinary shares may seem dear on normal valuations, but these are abnormal monetary times, and by way of contrast with American equities they are worth their investment price. Does the investor realise that many important British companies—in the chemical, motor, shipping, coal and textile trades—have been reporting higher profits for 1932? It is true.

* * *

Such is the glut of money, and such is the pursuit for a higher investment yield than the gilt-edged 3½ per cent., that ordinary shares of good standing cannot fail to rise. Nevertheless, if we were laying in an investment "nest egg" this Eastertide, we would confine our attention to companies operating in sheltered trades—such as Tate and Lyle, Spillers Milling and (*pace* the Salter Committee legislation) Thomas Tilling.

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COMPANY MEETING.

# IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, LIMITED.

## SATISFACTORY RESULTS OF YEAR'S OPERATIONS.

## INCREASED NET PROFITS.

## SIR HARRY McGOWAN ON THE OUTLOOK.

The sixth annual general meeting of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., was held on Tuesday last at Central Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.

Sir Harry McGowan, K.B.E. (the chairman), in the course of his speech, said: The results of the year's trading operations will, I am sure, have given you every satisfaction; 1932, in some respects, was a mixed year. The storm of the economic depression continued to rage throughout the world, and we may be thankful that in these islands we have been, as it were, within the shelter of a protected harbour. While not immune, Great Britain has achieved a measure of stability in the volume of her internal trade, and has also comparatively improved her position in international markets. At a cost of stoic efforts on the part of the taxpayer and patriotic sacrifice by investors in Government securities, we may be justifiably proud of our national financial position.

You will have read in the annual report of the general recovery in the volume of business in each of our eight manufacturing groups. In many products I.C.I. exports showed a satisfactory increase over 1931, thus improving upon the general British average. The under-valuation of sterling on the world's exchange markets has, of course, in many cases added to our competitive power, especially against countries adhering to the Gold Standard. We have also benefited by the increasing advantages flowing from the continuous improvement in our selling organisations, both at home and in overseas markets.

The net profits of the year, after providing £1,000,000 for the Central Obsolescence and Depreciation Fund, and £686,351 for Income Tax, amount to £4,729,072, showing an increase of £1,320,782, or 38 per cent. over the preceding year; 1932 being the third year of the depression, we are confident that these results are better than you could have expected. Besides the increased volume of business arising from the tariff and monetary changes I have mentioned, the improvement is attributable to the realisation of many administrative economies which have been put into effect, and further reduction of costs. These reductions arise partly from the expenditure of capital upon installations of improved machinery and plant, and partly from better processes of manufacture developed as a result of our heavy annual expenditure upon research.

### All Plants Fully Maintained

The company has continued its policy of fully maintaining all plants in a condition of the highest efficiency, as a normal charge against revenue. During the six years of the company's existence our total charges against revenue on account of the maintenance of the manufacturing assets of the eight groups, has exceeded £12,000,000. Further concentrations of manufacture have taken place, notably in the Alkali and Leathercloth Groups. Similar steps are in progress in the Metal Group. These concentrations are only effected after close studies by our technical and commercial advisers of all the factors involved. In no case have we had any reason to regret the action taken.

New capital expenditure during the year upon manufacturing plants has been restricted to those cases where, even in existing depressed conditions, careful estimates of the market, of prices and costs, have justified our embarking upon the venture. So long, however, as world trade shows its present contraction, so long as the artificial obstructions to its free flow are continued, there is little likelihood of our spending any substantial sum upon new plant and machinery. The only exception relates to the hydrogenation of coal into motor spirit, upon which subject I will say a few more words later.

The profits of the year have been computed upon the same lines as in the past. I may repeat the statement in the Annual Report that they include no profit from the sale of securities or other capital assets. As is fitting in a time of depression, we have been perhaps more stringent in the scrutiny of possible liabilities, especially those in connection with sales in countries where exchange restrictions are imposed. On the whole, we have reason to be content with the volume of remittances that we have been able to secure. Where exchange restrictions, however, have definitely precluded remittances of dividends, we have not brought them into account, but their amount is comparatively small.

We have adopted a more conservative method of estimating our Income Tax liabilities. As you will readily understand, the computation of the Income Tax liability of all our subsidiary companies is an extremely complicated matter. Each company constitutes a legal entity for Income Tax purposes, and has to be dealt with separately. In many cases enquiries by, and discussions with, the Inland Revenue Authorities proceed for several years. Naturally we provide for all possible liabilities. Each year, of course, progress is made, but I am afraid it does not sensibly diminish what I may call the arrears of discussion. In these circumstances, only our skilled experts in Income Tax Law—of whom we are fortunate enough to possess several—can adequately explain the tangle of hundreds of computations. You will, therefore, not expect me to provide you with any detailed figures. This I may say, however. The statutory liability to Income Tax upon the profits of manufacture and trading is calculated upon the basis of the profits arising in the preceding year. When profits are alternately falling and rising, this method accentuates the movement of that wave. To avoid this distortion of the relative profits of successive years, we have made an additional provision in the accounts of the Subsidiary Companies, in respect of the estimated increased Income Tax liability which will arise in consequence of the larger profits for 1932.

The increase of £426,000 in the provision for the Company's Income Tax, as distinguished from that of the Subsidiary Companies, is to be attributed partly to the same cause and partly to the additional tax required by the larger amount of profits put to reserve.

### Balance Sheet

We have again reviewed carefully the book value of the various manufacturing assets of the wholly-owned Subsidiary Companies, as a result of which we have decided, as stated in the Report, to apply £3,662,404 from the Central Obsolescence and Depreciation Fund to writing off excess values of certain buildings and plants.

The world is witnessing a deflation of old values. In reviewing our own assets, our judgment is necessarily coloured by this fact. Where, therefore, we are satisfied that current and future selling prices and prospects are not sufficient to sustain a capital value of plant and machinery, we are making provision for the fall.

Appropriations from the Fund are mainly credited to the Subsidiary Companies concerned, in order that they may write off the appropriate amounts in their own books from the assets affected. In addition, we have applied £725,000 from the General Reserve to writing off the other items stated in the Report. The distinction between the withdrawal from these two Accounts depends upon the nature of the assets to be written down as the Central Obsolescence and Depreciation Fund is drawn upon for buildings, plant and machinery only.

It is as yet too early to say whether this process is complete. Much will depend upon the measure of success achieved by the forthcoming World Economic Conference. It is clear from the Agenda published by the Preparatory Committee that only by international action can adequate remedies be found for many of the world's troubles. While there will be grave difficulties to be surmounted, I profess myself still an optimist, confident but cautious. Present discords are deep-seated; to remove them will require much patience, perseverance and sacrifice, for the adjustments to be made will be always contentious, and sometimes painful. The preservation of our capital structure is one of our first duties. It is a time for care and conservation. Nevertheless, we cannot be indifferent to the effect of Joint Stock Company's dividends upon the purchasing power of the community. We have, therefore, to hold a strict balance between this policy as regards our capital and the interests of our shareholders in the purchasing power of their dividends.

The directors have appropriated £500,000 of the profits to the general reserve, leaving a balance available, including £516,825 brought forward from 1931, of £4,745,897. The preference dividends were paid on the due dates and an interim ordinary dividend of 2½ per cent. on the 1st December last. We now recommend a final dividend on the ordinary shares of 3½ per cent., making 6 per cent. for the year.

To strengthen the Obsolescence and Depreciation Fund we have transferred £1,000,000 from the general reserve. After giving effect to these transfers and appropriations, the balance of the Central Obsolescence and Depreciation Fund in the books of the I.C.I. at 31st December, 1932, stands at £4,000,000, while the balance of the general reserve is £9,500,000. The balance of reserves in the books of the Subsidiary Companies for Obsolescence and Depreciation stood at the 31st December last at £3,160,602, so that our total reserves for this purpose amount to £7,160,602. Our cash resources have largely increased. At the 31st December the amount of cash in hand and invested in Government securities amounted to £7,076,269, or an increase of £2,853,369 over the preceding year, notwithstanding our having financed a bigger volume of trade.

(*Continued on page 490.*)

# IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, LIMITED.

(*Continued from page 489.*)

### Overseas Markets

I said last year that your company might anticipate few disadvantages and many advantages from the historic fiscal change which had taken place. After a year's experience of the working of the Import Duties Act, I am satisfied that this forecast has been amply justified. The Imperial Economic Conference held at Ottawa last summer is of too recent a date for any attempt to be made to estimate the results which may be expected to follow the agreements there signed. To my mind the great achievement lies in the actual conclusion of these agreements.

The three great Dominion companies in which we are largely interested—namely, Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand, Canadian Industries Limited (in which we are interested with Messrs. du Pont de Nemours and Co.), and African Explosives and Industries, Ltd. (in which our partners are the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.)—continue to make satisfactory progress.

Australian conditions have greatly improved as the result of the courageous steps which have been taken to adjust various economic factors to the new level set by the great fall in the price of primary commodities.

In Canada conditions are so closely attached to business activity in the United States that the continued severity of the depression in the latter country has been reflected in a poor volume of business in the former.

The welfare of African Explosives and Industries, Ltd., rests upon the activity of the mining industry, and the prosperity of the farmer. During 1932 the one did well, but the other badly. Following the abandonment of the Gold Standard by South Africa, the better condition of agriculture should be reflected in an improvement of this side of the company's business.

I myself have just returned from a visit to India, Palestine, and Egypt. In each of these countries we have wide and growing markets.

### Conditions in the Far East

Members of the staff of our Chinese, Japanese, Malayan and other companies met me in Calcutta and provided me with first-hand information as to the conditions of our businesses there. Throughout the Far East political and economic conditions are troubled; we are witnessing the evolution of new political ideals. As these become clarified we may anticipate that the great markets of the Far East will expand to the general advantage of British industry. Japan is a noteworthy exception. There the market for our products is shrinking as a result of a strong policy of economic nationalism. On the other hand, the exports of that country are expanding. I trust that the desirability of reciprocity of trade will not be forgotten. Subsidies to national industries may be justifiable in a certain limited number of cases, but the practice of building up an export trade upon that basis is difficult, if not impossible, to justify.

Our markets in Palestine and Egypt are not only already doing extremely well, but are capable of further development. Appropriate steps to this end, including the provision of the long credit customary in certain products in those countries, are being taken.

All the research laboratories of the company have been kept in full commission throughout the year, and the collaboration established between the Universities and the chemical industry has continued to be of mutual advantage.

Our annual expenditure in this country on technical research exceeds £500,000. This is all charged against revenue. Its benefits are continuous. They may be summarised as more economical manufacturing processes, improved outputs, finer products, more efficient technical services to our customers, and the development of new commodities. The major part of the expenditure is directed to these ends, but we do not neglect pure research in the chemical and other sciences which lie at the root of our industries.

### New Products

Recently our new products have consisted mainly of those which had previously been imported. So far as the manufacture of heavy chemicals is concerned—and under this head must be included nitrogenous fertilisers and the heavy organic products the use of which is so rapidly growing—this country is now self-supporting.

The rate of new discovery increases rather than slackens. The influence of chemical products and technique on agriculture, on the transport and conservation of foodstuffs, on textiles, and still more recently on building products, is sufficiently great to assure us of a progressive forward policy within our legitimate field. In the building industry we are engaged with the British Steelwork Association in studying the incidence of new products and new methods of construction on the prospect of replacing unsuitable housing. Re-housing offers one of the most promising avenues to a large-scale reduction of unemployment. The problem will be most efficiently solved by the application of large-scale productive methods in order to secure the essentials of economically cheaper forms of housing accommodation. Many of our products will, I am certain, play an important part in this development.

The new equipment of our Metal Group has made possible the rolling of zinc on a considerable scale. A growing demand for an explosive for coal mining which would give a bigger yield of round coal has been very successfully met by our new low-density type of explosive.

### Hydrogenation of Coal

We have continued our research work on hydrogenation with marked success. Much has been written on the economics of the process. These comments have necessarily been based only on costs, etc., which I myself made public some eighteen months ago, and do not make due allowance for the great strides since made.

Our technical staff is still working on the direct hydrogenation of coal. We are satisfied that this is the correct policy. It does not preclude the use of tars as they become available in suitable quantity and at suitable prices, and we foresee a definite field for tar hydrogenation as well.

Large-scale commercial development of our hydrogenation process now only waits upon progress in regard to a limited number of economic factors. When that is achieved we shall be prepared to invest a substantial sum out of our present liquid resources upon this enterprise.

### New Enterprise

The remedy for unemployment has partly to be found in the establishment and extension of new industries. In these days some security of tenure through Government measures is essential. The tariff partly provides the mechanism, but old or revenue duties are still subject to all the uncertainties of annual budget requirements. This defect should be remedied by appropriate transfers between the two categories of import duties. Encouragement should also be given to capital outlays on new ventures by a more elastic system of income tax allowances for wear and tear of the plant employed. The Crown cannot properly reply that the Income Tax Acts provide an allowance for obsolescence of plant, because that allowance only becomes effective if new expenditure is incurred on replacing the obsolete plant. New ventures which do not succeed do not renew their plant, and thus have no means of obtaining the allowance. In that event the provision is an empty shell. The Royal Commission on the Income Tax recognised this in its recommendation that an allowance should be granted in respect of obsolescence for machinery or plant, disused for any reason, whether replaced or not, except where the disuse was the result of the discontinuance of a business. New enterprise means fresh employment, but it also means risk. The Government shares the profit of success, but declines to share the risk of failure. These Wear and Tear and Obsolescence provisions should be enlarged and modernised to encourage new capital expenditure. The Government must meet industry in these matters if it desires to make an effective contribution to new enterprise. Industry for its part should assist by lowering the expectation of normal return upon the capital expenditure within the bounds of reasonable safety. This is our policy.

You will remember that in 1931, following discussions with our Trades Union Advisory Council, arrangements were made under which a large body of our workers agreed to accept a reduction in their wages. The manner in which this reduction was discussed and accepted gave us all great satisfaction. It has been a great pleasure to us to be able to announce to our workers that as from the 3rd April, 1933, these reductions would be abolished. It is the company's policy to pay as high a wage as is economically justifiable.

Our staff shared the burden of the reductions, so that we have felt it right to reconsider their position also. This is being done in the light of a recent general review of the organisation, classification and remuneration of the total staff.

In the long run the prosperity of every company depends upon personnel. It is our task to recruit, train and organise personnel in such a manner that the right men shall be in the right jobs, and that the company shall never lack high officials of great ability, thorough training, wide outlook, keen initiative and sound judgment.

### Prospects for 1933

At the moment the United States of America is in the midst of a financial crisis almost unprecedented even for that country of great financial movements. The outlook is obscure. That country has, I believe, to face a period of liquidation, the immediate outcome of which may be, not an improvement in general world economic conditions, but an accentuation of present difficulties. The great fall in prices has depreciated or destroyed a large volume of the assets upon which her purchasing power rested. The reaction of these events and their solution upon the complex problem of international debt payment is obscure. World competition in exchange depreciation makes what remains of international trade often an uncertain gamble.

Restrictions on exchanges, increased protective duties, the application of quotas, the establishment of bi-lateral clearing arrangements, and other barriers to international trade, as well as the wide abandonment of the Gold Standard, are all intimately connected with the great problem presented by the contrast between the abnormal fall in the prices of primary commodities and the unchanged volume of liability arising from the huge international network of debts. Until some fuller measure of agreement upon the necessary methods and machinery for dealing with this problem has been achieved, it is impossible to form any estimate of the future. We can, however, rely upon the sanity, steadfastness, and cool courage of our people, so that while industry, even in the home market, may still have to sustain further shocks arising from world conditions, we can be fairly confident that Great Britain is in some measure sheltered from the blast. Although the volume of our business in the current year shows in some directions a small comparative fall, I think, from our experience of the past years of this depression and our knowledge of the present, that we can look hopefully forward to the results of the year 1933 and to the continued prosperity of our company.

The report and accounts were adopted.

# Easter Appeals—

## NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

In last year's Report of the National Institute for the Blind, those who control the Institute spoke of the intense anxiety which they had felt as a result of the serious fall in the income of private citizens and consequently the threat to the income of their Institution, which is largely derived from voluntary subscriptions. They were able to say, however, in that Report that the income of the Institute for the previous year had been maintained and that by intelligently conceived economies in their administration they had been able not only to carry on their great work, but to extend its scope in a number of directions. In many cases, they reported, the amounts of subscriptions had been smaller, but time after time, a first donation had been supplemented when the outlook seemed brighter, and, even more remarkable, the total number of subscriptions had increased. It was "as though a temporary trial of perseverance and endurance had aroused in men and women deeper and wider sympathy towards those who must always persevere and endure."

The Report for the year ended March 31st, 1933, will, we believe, be published shortly and it is to be hoped that the Institution will be able to say again that it has been found possible to maintain fully its great work. This note, however, is concerned more with the current year's income, and it is only by making such convincing appeals as will be found on another page of this issue that the National Institute for the Blind can hope to carry on its stupendous task.

There are two ways in which readers of this journal can help the National Institute for the Blind—by contributing to its funds or by personal service. The Secretary will send a copy of the Institute's Annual Report if readers of this journal will send him a postcard, mentioning this note.

## THE SHAFTESBURY HOMES & "ARETHUSA" TRAINING SHIP.

£20,000 is still needed for the New "Arethusa" Training Ship to complete the cost of purchase, alterations, equipment, new shore frontage, etc. The old "Arethusa" Training Ship had the splendid record of training 10,000 boys for the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine. A particularly earnest appeal is made to readers to send donations so that this work of training poor boys for the two sea services may be carried on. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged from the Headquarters of the Society, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.

# London Amusements

## MATINEES

*All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.*

**ALDWYCH.** A Bit of a Test. Wed., Fri.

**DRURY LANE.** Wild Violets. M., W. & S.

**DUCHESS.** Children in Uniform. Wed., Sat.

**QUEEN'S.** Once in a Lifetime. Wed., Sat.

**ST. MARTIN'S.** The Green Bay Tree. Tu. W.F.

**SAVOY.** Jolly Roger. Wed. & Sat. & East. Mon.

**WESTMINSTER.** The Lake. Wed., Sat.

## THEATRES

**ALDWYCH.** Tem. 6404. 8.15. Wed., Fri., 2.30.
RALPH LYNN in
A BIT OF A TEST.
By Ben Travers.

**CROYDON REPERTORY.** Fairfield 4529.
April 17 at 5.0 & 8.15. Tu. to Fri. at 8.0; Sat. at 5.0 & 8.15.
HAY FEVER.
By NOEL COWARD.
All seats bookable, 1/6 to 3/6. Close to W. Croydon Stn.

**DRURY LANE.** 8.15. Mats., Mon., Wed., Sat., 2.30.
HASSARD SHORT'S production of
WILD VIOLETS.
A Musical Comedy Operetta. Tem. 7171.

**DUCHESS,** Aldwych, W.C.2. Tem. Bar 8243 & 4.
Evgs., 8.30. Wed., Sat., and EASTER MON. at 2.30.
CHILDREN IN UNIFORM.
N.B. NEW PRICES 2/- to 6/-, including tax.

**KINGSWAY.** Wed., April 19, and subs. at 8.
THE VOICE.
An original Drama, in Four Acts.
By LYND NATHAN and JOSEPH FRAZER.
1st Mat., Sat., April 22, 2.30, subs., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.

**QUEEN'S THEATRE.** (Ger. 4517).
Evenings at 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
BARRY JACKSON presents :—
ONCE IN A LIFETIME
EDITH EVANS.

**ST. MARTIN'S.** (Tem. Bar 1443).
Evenings at 8.30. Mats., Tues., Wed. & Fri. at 2.30.
THE GREEN BAY TREE
by Mordaunt Shairp.

**SAVOY.** 8.15. Wed., Sat., 2.30. Extra Mat. East. Mon.
GEORGE ROBEY in
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